

THE DYNASTS

AN EPIC-DRAMA
OF THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON
PARTS I AND II

BY
THOMAS HARDY

*And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And to impets blown for wars*

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THE DYNASTS

AN EPIC DRAMA OF THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON
IN THREE PARTS, NINETEEN ACTS, AND
ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY SCENES

THE TIME COVERED BY THE ACTION BEING ABOUT TEN YEARS

*And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong
And trumpets blown for wars*

PREFACE

THE Spectacle here presented in the likeness of a Drama is concerned with the Great Historical Calamity, or Clash of Peoples, artificially brought about some hundred years ago

The choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite summer residence during the war with the first Napoleon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on their more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district, being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to include the village which was the birthplace of Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar.

When, as the first published result of these accidents, *The Trumpet-Major* was printed, more than twenty years ago, I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits of plan, knowledge, and opportunity, to enter further into its events, a restriction that prevailed for many years. But the slight regard paid to English

influence and action throughout the struggle by so many Continental writers who had dealt with Napoleon's career, seemed always to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re embody the features of this influence in their true proportion, and accordingly, on a belated day about six years back, the following drama was outlined, to be taken up now and then at wide intervals ever since

It may, I think, claim at least a tolerable fidelity to the facts of its date as they are given in ordinary records. Whenever any evidence of the words really spoken or written by the characters in their various situations was attainable, as close a paraphrase has been aimed at as was compatible with the form chosen. And in all cases outside oral tradition, accessible scenery, and existing relics, my indebtedness for detail to the abundant pages of the historian, the biographer, and the journalist, English and Foreign, has been, of course, continuous

It was thought proper to introduce, as supernatural spectators of the terrestrial action, certain impersonated abstractions, or Intelligences, called Spirits. They are intended to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them, in the words of Coleridge, "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." The wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation, even *en versé*, and excluded the celestial machinery

of, say, *Paradise Lost*, as peremptorily as that of the *Illiad* or the *Eddas*. And the abandonment of the masculine pronoun in allusions to the First or Fundamental Energy seemed a necessary and logical consequence of the long abandonment by thinkers of the anthropomorphic conception of the same.

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only, that of the Pities, approximates to "the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator idealized"¹ of the Greek Chorus, it is impressionable and inconsistent in its views, which sway hither and thither as wrought on by events. Another group approximates to the passionless Insight of the Ages. The remainder are eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned. In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted Choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern expression of a modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes.

It may hardly be necessary to inform readers that in devising this chronicle piece no attempt has been made to create that completely organic structure of action, and closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama strictly self-contained. A panoramic show like the present is a series of historical "ordinates" (to use a term in geometry) the subject is familiar to all, and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the junctions required to combine the scenes into an artistic unity. Should the mental spectator be unwilling or unable to do this, a historical presentment on an intermittent plan, in which the *dramatis personæ* number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable.

In this assumption of a completion of the action by those to whom the drama is addressed, it is interesting, if un-

¹ Schlegel.

necessary, to name an exemplar as old as Aeschylus, whose plays are, as Dr Verrall reminds us,¹ scenes from stories taken as known, and would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination

Readers will readily discern, too, that *The Dynasts* is intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage. Some critics have averred that to declare a drama² as being not for the stage is to make an announcement whose subject and predicate cancel each other. The question seems to be an unimportant matter of terminology. Compositions cast in this shape were, without doubt, originally written for the stage only, and as a consequence their nomenclature of "Act," "Scene," and the like, was drawn directly from the vehicle of representation. But in the course of time such a shape would reveal itself to be an eminently readable one, moreover, by dispensing with the theatre altogether, a freedom of treatment was attainable in this form that was denied where the material possibilities of stagery had to be rigorously remembered. With the careless mechanism of human speech, the technicalities of practical mumming were retained in these productions when they had ceased to be concerned with the stage at all.

To say, then, in the present case, that a writing in play-shape is not to be played, is merely another way of stating that such writing has been done in a form for which there chances to be no brief definition save one already in use for works that it superficially but not entirely resembles.

Whether mental performance alone may not eventually be the fate of all drama other than that of contemporary or frivolous life, is a kindred question not without interest. The mind naturally flies to the triumphs of the Hellenic and Elizabethan theatre in exhibiting scenes laid "far in the

¹ Introduction to the *Choephori*

² It is now called an Epic drama (1909)

Unapparent," and asks why they should not be repeated
 But the meditative world is older, more invidious, more
 nervous, more quizzical, than it once was, and being unhappily
 perplexed by—

Riddles of Death Thebes never knew,

may be less ready and less able than Hellas and old England
 were to look through the insistent, and often grotesque,
 substance at the thing signified

In respect of such plays of poesy and dream a practicable
 compromise may conceivably result, taking the shape of a
 monotonic delivery of speeches, with dreamy conventional
 gestures, something in the manner traditionally maintained
 by the old Christmas mummers, the curiously hypnotizing
 impressiveness of whose automatic style—that of persons who
 spoke by no will of their own—may be remembered by all
 who ever experienced it. Gauzes or screens to blur outlines
 might still further shut off the actual, as has, indeed, already
 been done in exceptional cases. But with this branch of the
 subject we are not concerned here

T H

September 1903

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PART FIRST

CHARACTERS

I PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

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{ CHORUS OF THE YEARS	{ CHORUS OF RUMOURS
{ THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES	THE SHADE OF THE EARTH
{ CHORUS OF THE PITIES	
{ SPIRITS SINISTER AND IONIC	SPIRIT-MESSENGERS
{ CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IONIC SPIRITS	RECORDING ANGELS

II PERSONS

The names printed in italics are those of mute figures

MEN

GEORGE THE THIRD	<i>Viscount Sidmouth</i>
<i>The Duke of Cumberland</i>	ANOTHER NOBLE LORD
PITT	ROSE
FOX	<i>Canning</i>
SHEKIDAN	<i>Perceval</i>
WINDHAM	<i>Gey</i>
WILFBREAD	<i>Speaker Abbot</i>
TIEBNEY	TOMLINE BISHOP OF LINCOLN
BATHURST AND FULLER	SIR WALTER FAQUHAN
<i>Lord Chancellor Eldon</i>	<i>Count Munster</i>
EARL OF MALMESBURY	<i>Other Peers, Ministers, ex-Ministers,</i>
LOKD MULGRAVE	<i>Members of Parliament, and</i>
ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER	<i>Persons of Quality</i>
<i>Lord Grenville</i>	
<i>Viscount Castlereagh</i>	

NELSON
COLLINGWOOD
HANDY
SECRETARY SCOTT
DR BEATTY
DR MAGKATH
DR ALEXANDER SCOTT
BURKE PUSLEK
Lieutenant Pasco
ANOTHER LIEUTENANT
POLLARD, A MIDSHIPMAN
ANOTHER MIDSHIPMAN
Captain Adair
Lieutenants Ram and Whipple
Other English Naval Officers
Sergeant Major Secher and Marines
Staff and other Officers of the English
Army
A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS
Regiments of the English Army and
Hanoverian
SAILORS AND BOATMEN
A MILITIAMAN
Naval crews

*The Lord Mayor and Corporation of
London*

A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION
WILTSHIRE, A COUNTRY GENTLE-
MAN
A HORSEMAN
TWO BEACON WATCHERS
ENGLISH CITIZENS AND BURGESSES
COACH AND OTHER HIGHWAY
PASSENGERS
MESSINGERS, SERVANTS, AND
RUSTICS

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE
DARU NAPOLÉON'S WAR SECRE-
TARY
LAUKISTON, AIDE DE CAMP
MONGE, A PHILOSOPHER
BERTHIER
MURAT, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF
NAPOLÉON

SOUIT
NEY
LANNES
Bernadotte
Marmont

Dupont
Oudinot
Davout
Landamme
Other French Marshals
A SUB OFFICER

VILLNEUVE, NAPOLEON'S ADMIRAL
DUCLES, MINISTER OF MARINE
FLAG CAPTAIN MAGENDIE
LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON
LIEUTENANT FOURNIEK
DL PRIGNY, HEAD OF STAFF
Captain Lucas
OTHER FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS
AND PETTY OFFICERS
Seamen of the French and Spanish
Navies
Regiments of the French Army
COUSINS
HERALDS
Aides Officials, Pages, etc
ATTENDANTS
French Citizens

CARDINAL CAPKAKA
Priests, Acolyths and Choristers
Italian Doctors and Presidents
Institutions
Milanese Citizens

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS
THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND
Prince John of Lichtenstein
PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG
MACK AUSTRIAN GENERAL
JELLACHICH
RITSC
WEIROTHER
ANOTHER AUSTRIAN GENERAL
TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS

The Emperor Alexander
PRINCE KUTÚZOF, RUSSIAN FIELD
MARSHAL
COUNT LANGERON
COUNT BUXHOVEN

COUNT MILOKÁDOVICH
ДОБРОГО

*Giulay, Gottesheim Klenau and
Pischkezewsky
Regiments of the Austrian Army
Regiments of the Russian Army*

WOMEN

*Queen Charlotte
English Princesses
Ladies of the English Court
LADY HESTER STANHOPE
A LADY
Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs Damer
and other English Ladies*

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE
*Princesses and Ladies of Joséphine's
Court
Seven Milanese Young Ladies
City- and Towns-women
Country-women
A MILITIAMAN'S WIFE
A STREET-WOMAN
Ship women
Servants*

FORE SCENE

THE OVERWORLD

Enter the Ancient Spirit and Chorus of the Years the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities the Shade of the Earth the Spirits Sinister and Ironic with their Chorus Rumours Spirit-Messengers, and Recording Angels

SHADE OF THE EARTH

What of the Immanent Will and Its designs ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
Eternal artstries in Circumstance,
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt æsthetic rote,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Still thus ? Still thus ?
Ever unconscious !
An automatic sense
Unweeting why or whence ?
Be, then, the inevitable, as of old,
Although that so it be we dare not hold !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hold what ye list, fond unbelieving Sprites,
You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss,
Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought,
Unchecks Its clock-like laws*

SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Gooâ, as before
My little engines, then, will still have play*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Why doth It so and so, and ever so,
This voiceless, voiceless Turner of the Wheel?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*As one sad story runs, It lends Its heed
To other worlds, being wearied out with this,
Wherefore Its mindlessness of earthly woes
Some, too, have told at wheels that rightfully
Its warefulness, Its care, this planet lost
When in her early growth and crudity
By bad mad acts of severance men contrived,
Working such nescience by their own device—
Yea, so it stands in certain chronicles,
Though not in mine*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meet is it, nore the less,
To bear in thought that though Its consciousness
May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed,
Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay In the Foretime, even to the gum of Being
Nothing appears of shape to indicate
That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,
Or will (such is my thinking) in my span
Rather they show that, like a knitter doowse it,
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,
The Will has woven with an absent heed
Since life first was, and ever will so weave*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Hence we've rare dramas going—more so since
It wove Its web in that Ajacian womb!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Well, no more thus on what no mind can mete
Our scope is but to register and watch
By means of this great gift accorded us—
The free trajectory of our entities*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*On things terrene, then, I would say that though
 The human news wherewith the Rumours stirred us
 May please thy temper, Years, 'twere better far
 Such deeds were nulled, and this strange man's career
 Wound up, as making inharmonious jars
 In her creation whose meek wrath we know
 The more that he, turned man of mere traditions,
 Now profits naught For the large potencies
 Instilled into his idiosyncrasy—
 To throne fair Liberty in Privilege's room—
 Are taking taint, and sink to common plots
 For his own gain*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*And who, then, Cordial One,
 Wouldst substitute for this Intractable ?*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*We would establish those of kinder build,
 In fair Compassions skilled,
 Men of deep art in life development,
 Watchers and wanderers of thy varied lands,
 Men surfeited of laying heavy hands
 Upon the innocent,
 The mild, the fragile, the obscure content
 Among the myriads of thy family
 Those, too, who love the true, the excellent
 And make their daily moves a melody*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*They may come, will they I am not averse
 Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade
 Of her the Traveller, herself a thrall
 To It, in all her labourings cumbered and kinged !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Shall such be mooted now ? Already change
 Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded here
 But old Laws operate yet, and phase and phase
 Of men's dynastic and imperial moils
 Shape on accustomed lines Though, as for me,
 I care not how they shape, or what they be*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIFS

You seem to have small sense of mercy, Size ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Mercy I view, not urge,—nor more than mark
What designate your titles Good and Ill
'Tis not in me to feel with, or against,
These flesh-lunged mannikins Its hand upwinds
To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws,
But only through my centuries to behold
Their aspects, and their movements, and their mould*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*They are shabes that bleed, mere mannikins or no,
And each has parcel in the total Will*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Which overrides them as a whole its parts
In other entities*

SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Limbs of Itself
Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise ?
I'll fear all men henceforward !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIFS

Go to Let this terrestrial tragedy—

SPIRIT IRONIC

Nay, comedy—

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Let this earth-tragedy
Whereof ye spake, afford a spectacle
Forthwith conned closer than your custom is —*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*How does it stand ? (To a Recording Angel)
Open and chant the page
Thou'st lately writ, that sums these happenings,
In brief remunder of their instant points
Slighted by us amid our converse here*

RECORDING ANGEL (from a book, in recitative)

*Now mellow-eyed Peace is made captive,
And Vengeance is chartered
To deal forth its dooms on the Peoples
With sword and with spear*

*Men's musings are busy with forecasts
Of musters and battle,
And visions of shock and disaster
Rise red on the year*

*The easternmost ruler sits wistful,
And tense he to midward,
The King to the west mans his borders
In front and in rear*

*While one they eye, flushed from his crowning,
Ranks legions around him
To shake the ensiled neighbour nation
And close her career !*

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS (aerial music)

*O woven-winged squadrons of Toulon
And fellows of Rochefort,
Wait, wait for a wind, and draw westward
Ere Nelson be near !*

*For he reads not your force, or your freightage
Of warriors fell-handed,
Or when they will join for the onset,
Or whither they steer !*

SEMICHORUS II

*O Nelson, so zealous a watcher
Through months-long of cruising
Thy foes may elude thee a moment,
Put forth, and get clear,*

*And rendezvous westerly straightway
With Spain's aiding navies,
And hasten to head violation
Of Albion's frontier !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Methinks too much assurance thrills your note
 On secrets in my locker, gentle sprites,
 But it may serve — Our thought being now reflexed,
 To forces operant on this English isle,
 Behoves it us to enter scene by scene,
 And watch the spectacle of Europe's moves
 In her embroil, as they were self-ordained
 According to the naive and liberal creed
 Of our great-hearted young Compassionates,
 Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear,
 As puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings —
 You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte
 As he with other figures foots his reel,
 Until he twitch him into his lonely grave
 Also regard the frail ones that his flings
 Have made gyrate like ammalula
 In the pools — Hence to the precinct, then,
 And count as framework to the stagery
 Yon architraves of sunbeam-smitten cloud —
 So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be
 Not fuled by one Will, but function free*

The nether sky opens and Europe is disclosed as a plane and circumscribed figure, the Alps shaping like a backbone and the branching mountain chains like ribs, the peninsular plateau of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed by the Ural mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean.

The point of view then sinks downwards through space and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples distressed by events which they did not cause are seen writhing, crawling, heaving and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of the Cities)

*As key-scene to the whole, I first lay bare
 The Will-webs of thy fearful questioning,
 For know that of my antique privileges
 This gift to visualize the Mode is one
 (Though by exhaustive strain and effort only)
 See, then, and learn, ere my power pass again*

A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, endowing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (after a pause)

*Amid this scene of bodies substantive
 Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible,
 Which bear men's forms on their innumerable coils,
 Twining and serpentine round and through
 Also retracting threads like gossamers—
 Except in being irresistible—
 Which complicate with some, and balance all*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*These are the Prime Volitions,—fibres, veins,
 Will-issues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,
 That heave throughout the Earth's composition
 Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain
 Evolving always that it wots not of,
 A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere,
 And whose procedure may but be discerned
 By phantom eyes like ours, the while unguessed
 Of those it stirs, who (even as ye do) dream
 Their motions free, their orderings supreme,
 Each life apart from each, with power to mute
 Its own day's measures, balanced, self complete,
 Though they subsist but atoms of the One
 Labouring through all, divisible from none,
 But this no further now Deem yet man's deeds self-done*

The anatomy of the Immanent Will disappears

GENERAL CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES (general music)

*We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,
 We'll traverse Space, as spirits can,
 Link pulses severed by leagues and years,
 Bring cradles into touch with biers,
 So that the far-off Consequence appears
 Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause—
 The PRIME, that willid ere wariness was,
 Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought its laws
 Which we as threads and streams discern,
 We may but muse on, never learn*

END OF THE FORE SCENE

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

ENGLAND A RIDGE IN WESSEX

The time is a fine day in March 1805 A highway crosses the ridge which is near the sea and the south coast is seen bounding the landscape below, the open Channel extending beyond

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hark now, and gather how the martial mood
Stirs England's humblest hearts Anon we'll trace
Its heavings in the upper coteries there*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Ay, begin small, and so lead up to the greater It is a sound
dramatic principle I always aim to follow it in my pestilences,
fues, famines, and other comedies And though, to be sure, I did
not in my Lisbon earthquake, I did in my French Terror, and my
St Domingo burlesque*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*THY Lisbon earthquake, THY French Terror Hark
Thinking thou wilt, thou dost but indicate*

A stage coach enters, with passengers outside Their voices after the foregoing sound small and commonplace, as from another medium

FIRST PASSENGER

There seems to be a deal of traffic over Ridgeway, even at this time o' year

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes It is because the King and Court are coming down here later on They wake up this part rarely! See, now, how the Channel and coast open out like a chart That patch of mist below us is the town we are bound for There's the Isle of Slingeis beyond, like a floating snail That wide bay on the right is where the "Abergavenny," Captain John Wordsworth, was wrecked last month One can see half across to Fiancee up here

FIRST PASSENGER

Half across And then another little half, and then all that's behind—the Corsican mischief!

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes People who live hereabout—I am a native of these parts—feel the nearness of France more than they do inland

FIRST PASSENGER

That's why we have seen so many of these marching regiments on the road This year his grandest attempt upon us is to be made, I reckon

SECOND PASSENGER

May we be ready!

FIRST PASSENGER

Well, we ought to be We've had alarms enough, God knows

THIRD PASSENGER

I much doubt his intention to come at all

Some companies of infantry are seen ahead, and the coach presently overtakes them

SOLDIERS (singing as they walk)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty,
If he won't sail, lest the wind should blow,
We shall have marched for nothing, O!
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty,
If he be sea sick, says "No, no!"
We shall have marched for nothing, O!
Right fol-lol!

The soldiers draw aside, and the coach passes on

SECOND PASSENGER

Is there truth in it that Bonaparte wrote a letter to the King last month?

FIRST PASSENGER

Yes, sir A letter in his own hand in which he expected the King to reply to him in the same manner

SOLDIERS (continuing, as they are left behind)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty,
Never mind, mates, we'll be merry, though
We may have marched for nothing, O !
Right fol loi !

THIRD PASSENGER

And was Boney's letter friendly ?

FIRST PASSENGER

Certainly, sir He requested peace with the King

THIRD PASSENGER

And why shouldn't the King reply in the same manner ?

FIRST PASSENGER

What ! Encourage this man in an act of shameless presumption, and give him the pleasure of considering himself the equal of the King of England—whom he actually calls his brother !

THIRD PASSENGER

He must be taken for what he is, not for what he was, and if he calls King George his brother it doesn't speak badly for his friendliness

FIRST PASSENGER

Whether or no, the King, rightly enough, did not reply in person, but through Lord Mulgrave our Foreign Minister, to the effect that his Britannic Majesty cannot give a specific answer till he has communicated with the Continental powers

THIRD PASSENGER

Both the manner and the matter of the reply are British, but a huge mistake

FIRST PASSENGER

Sir, am I to deem you a friend of Bonaparte, a traitor to your country——

THIRD PASSENGER

Damn my wig, sir, if I'll be called a traitor by you or any Court sycophant at all at all ! [He unpicks a case of pistols

SECOND PASSENGER

Gentlemen, forbear, forbear ! Should such differences be suffered to arise on a spot where we may, in less than three months, be fighting for our very existence ? This is foolish, I say Heaven alone, who reads the secrets of this man's heart, can tell what his meaning and intent may be, and if his letter has been answered wisely or no

The coach is stopped to skid the wheel for the descent of the hill, and before it starts again a dusty horseman overtakes it

SEVERAL PASSENGERS

A London messenger ! (To horseman) Any news, sir ? We are from Bristol only

HORSEMAN

Yes, much We have declared war against Spain an error giving vast delight to France Bonaparte says he will date his next dispatches from London, and the landing of his army may be daily expected

[Exit horseman

THIRD PASSENGER (to First)

Sir, I apologize He's not to be trusted ! What is his name, and aggression is with him !

He repicks the pistols A silence follows The coach and passengers move downwards and disappear towards the coast

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I chanced it that the English monarch George
Did not respond to the sad Emperor !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I saw good sport therein, and pardon'd the Will
To an impel so stultifying a move !
Which would have marred the European broil,
And sheathed all swords, and silenced every gun
That riddle human flesh*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*O say no more,
If aught could gratify the Absolute
'Twould verily be thy censure, not thy praise !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*The ruling was that we should witness things
And not dispute them To the drama, then
Emprizes over-Channel are the key
To this land's stir and ferment—Thither we
Clouds gather over the scene and slowly open elsewhere*

SCENE II

PARIS OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF MARINE

ADMIRAL DECRES seated at a table A knock without

DECRES

Come in ! Good news, I hope !

[An attendant enters

ATTENDANT

A courier, sir

DECRES

Show him in straightway

[The attendant goes out

From the Emperor

As I expected !

A courier is admitted, who delivers a dispatch

COURIER

Sir, for your own hand

And yours alone

DECRES

Thanks Be in waiting near

[The courier withdraws

DECRES reads

"I am resolved that no wild dream of Ind,
And what we there might win, or of the West,

And bold re-conquest there of Surinam
 And other Dutch retreats along those coasts,
 Or British islands nigh, shall draw me now
 From piercing into England through Boulogne
 * As lined in my first plan If I do strike,
 I strike effectively, to foige which feat
 There's but one way—planting a mortal wound
 In England's heart—the very English land—
 Whose insolent and cynical reply
 To my well-pleaded plaint on breach of faith
 Concerning Malta, as at Amiens pledged,
 Has lighted up anew such brands of ire
 As may involve the world—Now to the case
 Our naval forces can be all assembled
 Without the foe's foreknowledge or surmise,
 By these rules following, to whose text I ask
 Your gravest application and, when conned,
 That steadfastly you stand by word and word,
 Making no question of one jot therein

“First, then, let Villeneuve wait a favouring wind
 For process westward swift to Martinique,
 Coaxing the English after Join him there
 Gravina, Missiessy, and Ganteaume,
 Which junction once effected all our keels—
 Now nigh to sixty sail—regain the Manche,
 While the pursuers linger in the West
 At hopeless fault—Having hoodwinked them thus,
 Our boats skim over, disembark the army,
 And in the twinkling of a patriot's eye
 All London will be ours

“In strictest secrecy carve this to shape—
 Let never an admiral or captain scent
 Save Villeneuve and Ganteaume, and pen each charge
 With your own quill The surelier to outwit them
 I start for Italy, and there, as 'twere
 Engrossed in fêtes and Coronation rites,
 Abide till, at the need, I reach Boulogne,
 And head the enterprise —NAPOLÉON.”

DECELS reflects, and turns to write

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

More ills ? How is Decrès ordained to move ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He buckles to the work First to Villeneuve,
His onetime comrade and his boyhood's friend,
Now lingering at Toulon, he jots swift lines,
Then duly to Ganteaume — They are sealed forthwith,
And superscribed "Break not till on the main"*

Boisterous singing is heard in the street

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I hear confused and summing sounds without,
Like those which thrill the hives at evenfall
When swarming pends*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They but proclaim the crowd,
Which sings and shouts its hot enthusiasms
For this dead ripe design on England's shore,
Till the persuasion of its own plump words,
Acting upon mercurial temperaments,
Makes hope as prophecy "Our Emperor
Will show himself (say they) in this exploit
Unwavering, keen, and irresistible
As is the lightning-prong Our vast flotillas
Have been embodied as by sorcery,
Soldiers made seamen, and the ports transformed
To rocking cities casemented with guns
Against these valiants balance England's means
Raw merchant-fellows from the counting-house,
Raw labourers from the fields, who thumb for arms
Clumsy untempered pikes forged hurriedly,
And cry them full-equipt Their batteries,
Their flying carriages, their catamarans,
Shall profit not, and in one summer night
We'll find us there !"*

RECORDING ANGEL

And is this prophecy true ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Occasion will reveal

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*What boots it, Sire,
To down this dynasty, set that one up,
Goad panting peoples to the throes thereof,
Make wither here my fruit, maintain it there,
And hold me travelling through finless years
In vain and objectless monotony,
When all such tedious conjuring could be shunned
By uncreation? Howsoever wise
The governance of these massed mortalities,
A juster wisdom his who should have ruled
They had not been*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, something hidden urged
The graving matter motion, and these coils
Are, maybe, good as any*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But why any?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Sprite of Compassions, ask the Immanent!
I am but an accessory of Its works,
Whom the Ages render conscious, and at most
Figure as bounden witness of Its laws*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*How ask the aim of unrelaxing Will
Tranced in Its purpose to unknowingness?
(If thy words, Ancient Phantom, token true)*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou answerest well But cease to ask of me
Meanwhile the mime proceeds — We turn herefrom,
Change our homuncules, and observe forthwith
How the High Influence sways the English realm,
And how the jai's lip out their reasonings there*

The Cloud curtain draws

SCENE III

LONDON THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS

A long chamber with a gallery on each side supported by thin columns having gilt Ionic capitals. Three round headed windows are at the further end above the Speaker's chair, which is backed by a huge pedimented structure in white and gilt, surmounted by the lion and the unicorn. The windows are uncurtained, one being open, through which some boughs are seen waving in the midnight gloom without. Wax candles burnt low, wave and gutter in a brass chandelier which hangs from the middle of the ceiling, and in branches projecting from the galleries.

The House is sitting the benches, which extend round to the Speaker's elbows being closely packed, and the galleries likewise full. Among the members present on the Government side are PITT and other ministers with their supporters, including CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, LORD C. SOMERSET, ERSKINE, W. DUNDAS, HUSKISSON, ROSE, BEST, ELIOT, DALLAS and the general body of the party. On the opposite side are noticeable FOX, SHELDON, WINDHAM, WHITBREAD, GREY, T. GRANVILLE, THURNEY, EARL TEMPLE, PONSONBY G. and H. WALPOLF, DUDLEY NORRIS, and TIMOTHY SHILLLEY. Speaker ABBOT occupies the Chair.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to two Recording Angels)

*As prelude to the scene, as means to aid
Our younger comrades in its construing,
Pray spread your scripture, and rehearse in brief
The reasonings here of late—to whose effects
Words of to night form sequence*

The Recording Angels chant from their books, antiphonally, in a minor recitative

ANGEL I (aerial music)

*Feeble-framed dull unresolve, unresourcefulness,
Sat in the halls of the Kingdom's high Councilors,
Whence the grey glooms of a ghost-eyed despondency
Wanned as with winter the national mind*

ANGEL II

*England stands forth to the sword of Napoleon
Nakedly—not an ally in support of her,
Men and mutations dispersed inexpediently,
Projects of range and scope poorly defined*

ANGEL I

*Once more doth Pitt deem the land crying loud to him —
Frail though and spent, and an hungered for restfulness
Once more responds he, dead fervours to energize,
Aims to concentrate, slack efforts to bind*

ANGEL II

*Ere the first fruit thereof voices grow audible,
Holding as hapless his dream of good guardianship,
Jestingly, earnestly, shouting it serviceless,
Tardy, inept, and uncouthly designed*

ANGELS I AND II

*So now, to-night, in the slashing old sentences,
Hear them speak, — gravely these, those with gay
heartedness, —
Midst their admonishments little concerning how
Scarlet the scroll that the years will unwind !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of the Years)

*Let us put on and suffer for the nonce
The feverish fleshings of Humanity,
And join the pale debaters here convened
So may thy soul be won to sympathy
By donning their poor mould*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll humour thee,
Though my unpassioned essence could not change
Did I incarnate in moulds of all mankind !*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*'Tis enough to make every little dog in England run to miren
to hear this Pitt sung so strenuously ! I'll be the third of the
incarnate, on the chance of hearing the tune played the other way*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*And I the fourth There's sure to be something in my line
toward, where politicians are gathered together !*

The four Phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise of ordinary strangers

SHERIDAN (rising)

The Bill I would have leave to introduce
 Is framed, sir, to repeal last Session's Act,
 By party scribes intituled a Provision
 For England's Proper Guard, but elsewhere known
 As Mr Pitt's new Patent Parish Pill (Laughter)

The ministerial countenances, I mark,
 Congeal to dazed surprise at my straight motion—
 Why, passes sane conjecture It may be
 That, with a haughty and unwavering faith
 In their own buttering-rams of argument,
 They deemed our buoyance whelmed, and sapped, and
 sunk

To hope's sheer bottom, whence a miracle
 Was all could fiend and float us, or, maybe,
 They are amazed at our rude disrespect
 In making mockery of an English Law
 Spurning sacred from the King's own Premier's brain!
 —I hear them snort, but let them wince at will,
 My duty must be done, shall be done quickly
 By citing some few facts

An Act for our defence!
 It weakens, not defends, and oversea
 Swoln France's despot and his myrmidons
 This moment know it, and can scoff thereat
 Our people know it too—those who can peer
 Behind the scenes of this poor painted show
 Called soldiering!—The Act has failed, must fail,
 As my right honourable friend well proved
 When speaking t'other night, whose silencing
 By his right honourable *viz-à-viz*
 Was of the genuine Governmental sort,
 And like the catamarans their sapience shaped
 All fizzle and no harm (Laughter) The Act, in brief
 Effects this much that the whole force of England
 Is strengthened by—eleven thousand men!
 So sorted that the British infantry
 Are now eight hundred less than heretofore!

In Ireland, where the glamouring influence
 Of the right honourable gentleman
 Prevails with magic might, *eleven* men

Have been amassed And in the Cinque-Port towns,
 Where he is held in absolute veneration,
 His method has so quickened martial fire
 As to bring in—one man O would that man
 Might meet my sight ! (Laughter) A Hercules, no doubt,
 A god-like emanation from this Act,
 Who with his single aim will overthrow
 All Buonaparte's legions ere their keels
 Have scraped one pebble of our fortless shores !
 Such is my motion, sir, and such my mind

[He sits down amid cheers]

The candle snuffers go round and PIER rises During the momentary
 pause before he speaks the House assumes an attentive stillness in which can
 be heard the rustling of the trees without a horn from an early coach and
 the voice of the witch crying the hour

PIER

Not one on this side but appreciates
 Those mental gems and airy pleasures
 Flashed by the honourable gentleman,
 Who shines in them by buthlight Each device
 Of drollery he has laboured to outshape,
 (O! treasured up from others who have shaped it,)
 Displays that are the conjurings of the moment,
 (O! mellowed and matured by sleeping on)—
 Dry hoardings in his book of commonplace,
 Stored without stint of toil through days and months—
 He heaps into one mass, and lights and fans
 As fuel for his flaming eloquence,
 Mouthed and maintained without a thought or care
 If germane to the theme, or not at all

Now vain indeed it were should I assay
 To match him in such sort For, sir, alas,
 To use imagination as the ground
 Of chronicle, take myth and merry tale
 As texts for prophecy, is not my gift
 Being but a person pummed with simple fact,
 Unpinked by jewelled art —But to the thing

The preparations of the enemy,
 Doggedly bent to desolate our land,
 Advance with a sustained activity
 They are seen, they are known, by you and by us all

But they evince no clear-eyed tentative
 In furtherance of the threat, whose coming off,
 Ay, years may yet postpone, whereby the Act
 Will far outstrip him, and the thousands called
 Duly to join the ranks by its provisions,
 In process sure, if slow, will ratch the lines
 Of English regiments—seasoned, cool, resolved—
 To glorious length and firm prepotency
 And why, then, should we dream of its repeal
 Ere profiting by its advantages?
 Must the House listen to such wilding words
 As this proposal, at the very hour
 When the Act's gearing finds its ordered grooves
 And circles into full utility?
 The motion of the honourable gentleman
 Reminds me aptly of a publican
 Who should, when malting, mixing, mashing's past,
 Fermenting, barrelling, and spigoting,
 Quick taste the brew, and shake his sapient head,
 And cry in acid voice The ale is new!
 Brew old, you varlets, cast this slop away! (Cheers)

But gravely, sir, I would conclude to night,
 And, as a serious man on serious things,
 I now speak here I pledge myself to this
 Unprecedented and magnificent

As were our strivings in the previous war,
 Our efforts in the present shall transcend them,
 As men will learn Such efforts are not sized
 By this light measuring-rule my critic here
 Whips from his pocket like a clerk-o'-works!
 Tasking and toilsome war's details must be,
 And toilsome, too, must be their criticism,—
 Not in a moment's stroke extemporized

The strange fatality that haunts the times
 Wherein our lot is cast, has no example
 Times are they fraught with peril, trouble, gloom,
 We have to mark their leanings, and to face them
 Sir, reading thus the full significance
 Of these big days, large though my lackings be,
 Can any hold of those who know my past
 That I, of all men, slight our safeguarding?
 No by all honour no!—Were I convinced

That such could be the mind of members here,
 My sorrowing thereat would doubly shade
 The shade on England now ! So I do trust
 All in the House will take my tendered word,
 And credit my deliverance here to night,
 That in this vital point of watch and ward
 Against the threatenings from yonder coast
 We stand prepared , and under Providence
 Shall fend whatever hid or open stroke
 A foe may deal

He sits down amid loud ministerial cheers, with symptoms of great exhaustion

WINDHAM

The question that compels the House to night
 Is not of differences in wit and wit,
 But if for England it be well or no
 To null the new-fledged Act, as one inept
 For setting up with speed and hot effect
 The red machinery of desperate war —
 Whatever it may do, or not, it stands,
 A statesman's raw experiment If ill,
 Shall more experiments and more be tried
 In stress of jeopardy that thus demand
 For sueness of proceeding ? Must this House
 Exchange safe action based on practised lines
 For yet more ventures into risks unknown
 To gratify a quaint projector's whim,
 While enemies hang ginning round our gates
 To profit by mistake ?

My friend who spoke
 Found comedy in the matter Comical
 As it may be in parentage and feature,
 Most grave and tragic in its consequence
 This Act may prove We are moving thoughtlessly,
 We squander precious, brief, life-saving time
 On idle guess-games Fail the measure must,
 Nay, failed it has already, and should rouse
 Resolve in its progenitor himself
 To move for its repeal ! (Cheers)

WHITBREAD

I rise but to subjoin a phrase or two
 To those of my right honourable friend
 I, too, am one who reads the present pinch
 As passing all our risks of heretofore
 For why? Our bold and reckless enemy,
 Relaxing not his plans, has treasured time
 To mass his monstrous force on all the coigns
 From which our coast is close assailable
 Ay, even afloat his concentrations work
 Two vast united squadrons of his sail
 Move at this moment viewless on the seas —
 Their whereabouts, untraced, unguessable,
 Will not be known to us till some black blow
 Be dealt by them in some undreamt of quarter
 To knell our rule
 That we are reasonably enclosed therefore
 By such an Act is but a madman's dream
 A commonwealth so situate cries aloud
 For more, far mightier, measures! End an Act
 In Heaven's name, then, which only can obstruct
 The fabrication of more trusty tackle
 For building up an army! (Cheers)

BATHURST

See, the point
 To any sober mind is bright as noon,
 Whether the Act should have befitting trial
 Or be blasphemed at sight I firmly hold
 The latter loud iniquity — One task
 Is theirs who would inter this corpse-cold Act —
 (So said) — to bring to birth a substitute!
 Sir, they have none, they have given no thought to one,
 And thus their deeds incautiously disclose
 Their cloaked intention and most secret aim!
 With them the question is not how to frame
 A finer trick to trounce intrusive foes,
 But who shall be the future ministers
 To whom such trick against intrusive foes,
 Whatever it may prove, shall be entrusted!
 They even ask the country gentlemen

To join them in this job But, God be praised,
 Those gentlemen are sound, and of repute,
 Their names, their property, their character,
 Their numbers, their attainments, and their blood,
 (Ironical Opposition cheers)
 Safeguard them from an onslaught on an Act
 For ends so sinister and palpable ! (Cheers and jeerings)

FULLER

I disapprove of censures of this Act —
 All who can entertain such hostile thought
 Would swear that black is white, that night is day
 No honest man will join a reckless crew
 Who'd overthrow their country for their gain ! (Laughter)

TIERNEY

It is incumbent on me to declare
 In the last speaker's face my censure, based
 On grounds most clear and constitutional —
 An Act it is that studies to create
 A standing army, large and permanent,
 Which kind of force has ever been beheld
 With jealous-eyed disfavour in this House
 It makes for sure oppression, binding men
 To serve for less than service proves it worth
 Conditioned by no hampering penalty
 For these and late-spoken reasons, then, I say,
 Let not the Act deface the statute-book,
 But blot it out forthwith (Hear hear)

FOX (rising amid cheers)

At this late hour,
 After the riddling fire the Act has drawn on't,
 My words shall hold the House the briefest while
 Too obvious to the most unwilling mind
 It grows that the existence of this law
 Experience and reflection have condemned
 Professing to do much, it makes for nothing,
 Vouched as assuring all, it comforts none
 Not only so, while feeble in effect
 It shows it vicious in its principle
 Engaging to rouse men for the common weal,

It sets a harmful and unequal tax
 Capriciously on our communities —
 The annals of a century fail to show
 More flagrant cases of oppressiveness
 Than those this statute works to perpetrate,
 Which (like all Bills this favoured statesman frames,
 And clothes with tapestries of rhetoric
 Disguising their real web of commonplace)
 Though held as shaped for English bulwarking,
 Breathes in its heart perversities of party,
 And instincts toward oligarchic power,
 Galling the many to relieve the few! (Cheers)

Whatever breadth and sense of equity
 Inform the methods of this minister,
 Those mitigants nearly always trace their root
 To measures that his predecessors wrought
 And ere his Government can dare assert
 Superior claims to England's confidence,
 They owe it to their honour and good name
 To furnish better proof of such a claim
 Than is revealed by the abjectness
 Of this thing called an Act for our Defence

To the great gifts of its artificer
 No member of this House is more disposed
 To yield full recognition than am I
 No man has found more reason so to do
 Through the long roll of disputatious years
 Wherein we have stood opposed
 But if one single fact could counsel me
 To entertain a doubt of those great gifts,
 And cancel faith in his capacity,
 That fact would be the vast impudence shown
 In staking recklessly repute like his
 On such an Act as he has offered us—
 So false in principle, so poor in fruit
 Sir, the achievements and effects thereof
 Have furnished not one fragile argument
 Which all the partiality of friendship
 Can kindle to consider as the mark
 Of a clear, vigorous, freedom-fostering mind!

He sits down amid lengthy cheering from the Opposition

SHERIDAN

My summary shall be brief, and to the point —
 The said right honourable Prime Minister
 Has thought it proper to declare my speech
 The jesting of an irresponsible, —
 Words from a person who has never read
 The Act he claims him urgent to repeal
 Such quips and quizzings (as he reckons them)
 He implicates as gathered from long hoards
 Stored up with cruel care, to be discharged
 With sudden blaze of pyrotechnic art
 On the devoted, gentle, shrinking head
 O' the right incomparable gentleman ! (Laughter)
 But were my humble, solemn, sad oration (Laughter)
 Indeed such rattle as he rated it,
 Is it not strange, and passing precedent,
 That the illustrious chief of Government
 Should have uprisen with such indecent speed
 And strenuously replied ? He, sir, knows well
 That vast and luminous talents like his own
 Could not have been demanded to choke off
 A witcraft marked by nothing more of weight
 Than ignorant irregularity !
Nec Deus intervrit—and so and-so—
 Is a well-worn citation whose close fit
 None will perceive more clearly in this Fane
 Than its presiding Deity opposite (Laughter)
 His thunderous answer thus perforce condemns him !
 Moreover, to top all, the while replying,
 He still thought best to leave intact the reasons
 On which my blame was founded !

Thus, then, stands
 My motion unimpaired, convicting clearly
 Of dire perversion that capacity
 We formerly admired — (Cries of ' Oh oh ')

This minister
 Whose circumventions never circumvent,
 Whose coalitions fail to coalesce ,
 This dab at secret treaties known to all,
 This darling of the aristocracy—

(Laughter, " Oh, oh, " cheers, and cries of ' Divide ')

Has brought the millions to the verge of ruin,
By pledging them to Continental quarrels
Of which we see no end ! (Cheers)

The members rise to divide

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*It irks me that they thus should Yea and Nay
As though a power lay in their oracles,
If each decision work unscrupulously,
And would be operant though unloosened were
A single lip !*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*There may react on things
Some influence from these, indefinitely,
And even on That, whose outcome we all are*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hypotheses !—More boots it to remind
The younger here of our ethereal band
And hierarchy of Intelligences,
That thus thwart Parliament whose moods we watch—
So insular, empiric, un-ideal—
May figure forth in sharp and salient lines
To retrospective eyes of after days,
And print its legend large on History
For one cause—if I read the signs aright—
To-night's appearance of its Minister
In the assembly of his long-time sway
Is near his last, and themes to night launched forth
Will take a tincture from that memory,
When men recall the scene and circumstance
That hung about his pleadings—But no more,
The ritual of each party is rehearsed,
Dislodging not one vote or prejudice,
The ministers their ministries retain,
And Ins as Ins, and Outs as Outs, remain*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meanwhile what of the Foeman's vast array
That waxes these tones ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Abide the event, young Shade
Soon stars will shut and show a spring-eyed dawn,
And sunbeams fountain forth, that will arouse
Those forming bands to full activity*

An honourable mei Lei reports that he spies strangers
*A timely token that we dally here !
We now cast off these mortal manacles,
And speed us seaward*

The Phantoms vanish from the Gallery The members file out to the lobbies The House and Westminster recede into the films of night, and the point of observation shifts rapidly across the Channel

SCENE IV

THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

The morning breaks radiant with early sunlight The French Army of Invasion is disclosed On the hills on either side of the town and behind appear large military camps formed of timber huts Lower down are other camps of more or less permanent kind the whole affording accommodation for one hundred and fifty thousand men

South of the town is an extensive basin surrounded by quays, the heaps of fresh soil around showing it to be a recent excavation from the banks of the Liane The basin is crowded with the flotilla consisting of hundreds of vessels of sundry kinds flat bottomed brigs with guns and two masts boats of one mast carrying each an artillery waggon two guns and a two stilled horse box, transports with three low masts and long narrow pinnaces arranged for many oars

Timber saw mills and new-cut planks spread in profusion around and many of the town residences are seen to be adapted for warehouses and infirmaries

DUMB SHOW

Moving in this scene are countless companies of soldiery engaged in a drill practice of embarking and disembarking and of hoisting horses into the vessels and landing them again Vehicles bearing provisions of many sorts load and unload before the temporary warehouses Further off on the open land bodies of troops are at field drill Other bodies of soldiers half stripped and encrusted with mud, are labouring as navvies in repairing the excavations

An English squadron of about twenty sail, comprising a ship or two of the line frigates brigs and luggers, confronts the busy spectacle from the sea

The Show presently dims and becomes broken till only its flashes and gleams are visible when a curtain of cloud closes over it

SCENE V

LONDON THE HOUSE OF A LADY OF QUALITY

A fashionable crowd is present at an evening party, which includes the DUKES of BEAUFORT and RUTLAND LORDS MALMESBURY, HARROWBY, ELTON, GRLNVILLE CASTLEKEAGH, SIDMOUTH, and MULGRAVE with their ladies, also CANNING PLRCEVAL TOWNSHEND LADY ANNE HAMILTON, MRS DAMER, LADY CAROLINE LAMB, and many other notables

A GENTLEMAN (offering his snuff-box)

So, then, the Treaty anxiously concerted
Between ourselves and frosty Muscovy
Is duly signed ?

A CABINET MINISTER

Was signed a few days back,
And is in force And we do firmly hope
The loud pretensions and the stunning din
From new aggressiveness by France's chief,
Now daily heard, these laudable exertions
May keep in curb, that ere our greening land
Darken its leaves beneath the Dogday suns,
The independence of the Continent
May be assured, and all the rumbled flags
Of famous dynasties so foully mauled,
Extend their honoured hues as heretofore

GENTLEMAN

So be it Yet this man is a volcano,
And proven 'tis, by God, volcanoes choked
Have ere now turned to earthquakes !

A lady comes up and playfully taps his arm

LADY

What's the news ?—
The chequerboard of diplomatic moves
Is London, all the world & nows here are born
All inspirations of the Continent—
So tell !

GENTLEMAN

Ay Inspirations now abound !

LADY

Nay, but your looks are grave ! That measured speech
 Betokened matter that will waken us —
 Is it some piquant cruelty of his ?
 Or other tickling horror from abroad
 The packet has brought in ?

GENTLEMAN

The treaty's signed !

MINISTER

Whereby the parties mutually agree
 To knit in union and in general league
 All outraged Europe

LADY

So to knit sounds well ,
 But how ensure its not unavelling ?

MINISTER

Well , by the terms There are among them these
 Five hundred thousand active men in arms
 Shall strike (supported by Britannic aid
 In vessels, men, and money subsidies)
 To free North Germany and Hanover
 From trampling foes , deliver Switzerland,
 Unbind the galled republic of the Dutch,
 Rethrone in Piedmont the Sardinian King,
 Make Naples sword-proof, un-French Italy
 From shore to shore , and thoroughly guarantee
 A settled order to the divers states ,
 Thus rearing breachless barriers in each realm
 Against the thrust of his usurping hand

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They know not what is shaping otherwhere
 The while they talk thus stoutly '*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

Bid me go

*And join them, and all blandly kindle them
 By bringing, ere material transit can,
 A new surprise '*

SPIRIT OF THE YFARS

Yea, for a moment, wouldst

The Spirit of Rumour enters the apartment in the form of a personage of fashion, newly arrived. He advances and addresses the group.

SPIRIT

*The Treaty moves all tongues to night — Ha, well—
So much on paper !*

GENTLEMAN

What on land and sea ?
You look, old friend, full primed with latest thence

SPIRIT

*Yea, this — The Italy our mighty pact
Delivers from the French and Bonaparte
Majest haste to crown him ! — Turning from Boulogne
He speeds toward Milan, there to glory him
In second coronation by the Pope,
And set upon his irrepressible brow
Lombardy's iron crown*

The Spirit of Rumour mingles with the throng, moves away, and disappears.

LADY

Fair Italy,
Alas, alas !

LORD

Yet thereby English folk
Are freed him — Faith, as ancient people say,
It's an ill wind that blows good luck to none !

MINISTER

Who is your friend that drops so airily
This precious pinch of salt on our raw skin ?

GENTLEMAN

Why, Norton. You know Norton well enough ?

MINISTER

Nay, 'twas not he. Norton of course I know.
I thought him Stewart for a moment, but——

LADY

But I well scanned him—'twas Lord Abeicorn,
For, said I to myself, "O quaint old beau,
To sleep in black silk sheets so funnily"—
That is, if the town rumour on't be true

LORD

My wig, ma'am, no! 'Twas a much younger man

GENTLEMAN

But let me call him! Monstrous silly this,
That I don't know my friends!

They look around The gentleman goes among the singing and babbling
guests, makes inquiries and returns with a perplexed look

GENTLEMAN

They tell me, sure,
That he's not here to-night!

MINISTER

I can well swear
It was not Norton—'Twas some lively buck,
Who chose to put himself in masquerade
And enter for a whim I'll tell our host
—Meantime the absurdity of his report
Is more than manifested How knows he
The plans of Bonaparte by lightning flight,
Before another man in England knows?

LADY

Something uncanny's in it all, if true
Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden sweat,
That fairly makes my linen stick to me!

MINISTER

Ha-ha! 'Tis excellent But we'll find out
Who this impostor was

They disperse look furtively for the stranger, and speak of the incident
to others of the crowded company

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Now let us vision onward, till we sight
Famed Milan's azules of marble, sun-alight,
And there behold, unbid, the Coronation rite*

The confused tongues of the assembly waste away into distance, till they are heard but as the babblings of the sea from a high cliff, the scene becoming small and indistinct therewith. This passes into silence, and the whole disappears.

SCENE VI

MILAN THE CATHEDRAL

The interior of the building on a sunny May day

The walls, arches and columns are draped in silk fringed with gold. A gilded throne stands in front of the High Altar. A closely packed assemblage, attired in every variety of rich fabric and fashion waits in breathless expectation.

DUMB SHOW

From a private corridor leading to a door in the aisle the EMPRESS JOSEPHINE enters in a shining costume and diamonds that collect rainbow-colours from the sunlight piercing the clerestory windows. She is preceded by PRINCESS ELIZA and surrounded by her ladies. A pause follows and then comes the procession of the EMPEROR consisting of hussars, heralds, pages, aides-de camp, presidents of institutions, officers of state bearing the insignia of the Empire and of Italy and seven ladies with offerings. The EMPEROR himself is in royal robes wearing the Imperial crown, and carrying the sceptre. He is followed by ministers and officials of the household. His gait is rather defiant than dignified, and a bluish pallor overspreads his face.

He is met by the Cardinal Archbishop CAPRARA and the clergy, who burn incense before him as he proceeds towards the throne. Rolling notes of music burst forth, and loud applause from the congregation.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*A local cult, called Christianity,
Which the wild dramas of the wheeling spheres
Include, with divers other such, in dim
Pathetical and brief parentheses,*

*Beyond whose span, uninfluenced, unconcerned,
The systems of the suns go sweeping on
With all their many-mortaled planet train
In mathematic roll unceasingly*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I did not recognize it here, forsooth,
Though in its early, lovingly days
Of gracious purpose it was much to me*

ARCHBISHOP (addressing BONAPARTE)

Sire, with that clemency and right goodwill
Which beautify Imperial Majesty,
You deigned acceptance of the homages
That we the clergy and the Milanese
Were proud to offer when your entrance here
Streamed radiance on our ancient capital
Please, then, to consummate the boon to day
Beneath this holy roof, so soon to thrill
With solemn strains and lifting harmonies
Befitting such a coronation hour,
And bend a tender fatherly regard
On this assembly, now at one with me
To supplicate the Author of All Good
That He endow your most Imperial person
With every Heavenly gift

The procession advances and the EMPEROR seats himself on the throne, with the banners and regalia of the Empire on his right, and those of Italy on his left hand. Shouts and triumphal music accompany the proceedings, after which Divine service commences

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Thus are the self-sold servants of the Highest
Constrained by earthly duress to embrace
Mighty imperiousness as it were choice,
And hand the Italian sceptre unto one
Who, with a saturnine, sour-humoured grin,
Professed at first to flout antiquity,
Scorn lump conventions, smile at mouldy thrones,
And level dynasts down to journeymen!—
Yet he, advancing swiftly on that track
Whereby his active soul, fair Freedom's child,*

*Makes strange decline, now labours to achieve
The thing it overthrew*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou reasonest ever thuswise—even as if
A self-formed force had urged his loud career*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Do not the prelate's accents falter then,
His lips with inheld laughter grow deformed,
While blessing one whose aim is but to win
The golden seats that other b——s have wonned?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Soft, jester, scorn not puppetry so skilled,
Even made to feel by one men call the Dame*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Yea, that they feel, and puppetry remain,
Is an owned flaw in her consistency
Men love to dub Dame Nature—that lay-shape
They use to hang phenomena upon—
Whose deftest mothering in fairest spheres
Is girt about by terms inexorable!*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*The lady's remark is apposite, and reminds me that I may as
well hold my tongue as desired. For if my casual scorn, Father
Years, should set thee trying to prove that there is any right or
reason in the Universe, thou wilt not accomplish it by Doomsday!
Small blame to her, however, she must cut her coat according to
her cloth, as they would say below there*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*O would that I could move It to enchain thee,
And shut thee up a thousand years!—(to cite
A grim terrestrial tale of one thy like)
Thou Iago of the Incorporeal World,
"As they would say below there"*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Would thou couldst !
But move That scaped above perciepience, Sire,
It cannot be !*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

The spectacle proceeds

SPIRIT SINISTER

*And we may as well give all attention thereto, for the evils at
work in other continents are not worth eyesight by comparison*

The ceremonial in the Cathedral continues NAPOLÉON goes to the front
of the altar, ascends the steps and, taking up the crown of Lombardy,
places it on his head

NAPOLÉON

'Tis God has given it to me So be it
Let any who shall touch it now beware !

(Reverberations of applause)

The Sacrament of the Mass NAPOLÉON reads the Coronation Oath in
a loud voice

HERALDS

Give ear ! Napoléon, Empeior of the French
And King of Italy, is crowned and throned !

CONGREGATION

Long live the Empeior and King Huzza !
Music The Te Deum

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*That vulgar stroke of vauntery he displayed
In planting on his brow the Lombard crown,
Means sheer erasure of the Luneville pacts,
And lets confusion loose on Europe's peace
For many an undawned year ! From this rash hour
Austria but waits her opportunity
By secret swellings of her armaments
To link her to his foes — I'll speak to him*

He throws a whisper into NAPOLÉON'S ear

*Lieutenant Bonaparte,
Would it not seemlier be to shut thy heart
To these unhealthy splendours ? — helmet thee
For her thou swar'st to first, fair Liberty ?*

NAPOLÉON

Who spoke to me ?

ARCHBISHOP

Not I, Sire Not a soul

NAPOLÉON

Dea! Josephine, my queen, didst call my name ?

JOSLPHINE

I spoke not, Sire

NAPOLÉON

Thou didst not, tender spouse,

I know it Such harsh utterance was not thine

It was aggressive Fancy, working spells

Upon a mind o'erwrought !

The service closes The clergy advance with the canopy to the foot of the throne, and the procession forms to return to the Palace

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Officious sprite,

Thou art young, and dost not heed the Cause of things

Which some of us have inkled to thee here,

Else wouldst thou not have hailed the Emperor,

Whose acts do but outshape Its governing

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I feel, Sire, as I must ! This tale of Will

And Life's impulsion by Incognizance

I cannot take

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Let me then once again

Show to thy sceptic eye the very streams

And currents of this all-inhering Power,

And bring conclusion to thy unbelief

The scene assumes the preternatural transparency before mentioned, and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of a Universal Will of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Enough And yet for very sorriuess

I cannot own the weird phantasma real !

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Affection ever was illogical

SPIRIT IRONIC (aside)

How should the Sprite own to such logic—a mere juvenile—who only came into being in what the earthlings call their Tertiary Age!

The scene changes The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place of the interior, and the point of view recedes, the whole fabric smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved alabaster ornament The city itself sinks to miniature the Alps show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Genoa appear on this and on that hand, with Italy between them, till clouds cover the panorama

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

THE DOCKYARD, GIBRALTAR

The Rock is seen rising behind the town and the Alameda Gardens, and the English fleet rides at anchor in the Bay, across which the Spanish shore from Algeciras to Carnero Point shuts in the West Southward over the Strait is the African coast

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Our migratory Proskerton now presents
An outlook on the storied Kalpe Rock,
As preface to the vision of the Fleets
Spanish and French, linked for fell purposings.*

RECORDING ANGEL (reciting)

*Their motions and manœuvres, since the fame
Of Bonaparte's enthronement at Milan
Swept swift through Europe's dumb communities,
Have stretched the English mind to wide surmise
Many well-based alarms (which strange report
Much aggravates) as to the pondered blow,
Flutter the public pulse, all points in turn—
Malta, Brazil, Wales, Ireland, British Ind—
Being held as feasible for force like theirs,
Of lavish numbers and unrecking aim*

*"Where, where is Nelson?" questions every tongue,—
 "How views he so unparalleled a scheme?"
 Their slow uncertain apprehensions ask
 "When Villeneuve puts to sea with all his force,
 What may he not achieve, if swift his course!"*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll call in Nelson, who has stepped ashore
 For the first time these thrice twelvemonths and more,
 And with him one whose insight has alone
 Pierced the real project of Napoleon*

Enter NELSON and COLLINGWOOD who pace up and down

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Note Nelson's worn-out features Much has he
 Suffered from ghoulish ghast anxiety!*

NELSON

In short, dear Coll, the letter which you wrote me
 Had so much pith that I was fain to see you,
 For I am sure that you indeed divine
 The true intent and compass of a plot
 Which I have spelled in vain

COLLINGWOOD

I weighed it thus
 Their flight to the Indies being to draw us off,
 That and no more, and clear these coasts of us—
 The standing obstacle to his device—
 He cared not what was done at Martinique,
 Or where, provided that the general end
 Should not be jeopardized—that is to say,
 The full-united squadron's quick return —
 Gravina and Villeneuve, once back to Europe,
 Can straight make Ferrol, raise there the blockade,
 Then haste to Brest, there to relieve Ganteaume,
 And next with four- or five-and-fifty sail
 Bear down upon our coast as they see fit —
 I read they aim to strike at Ireland still,
 As formerly, and as I wrote to you

NELSON

So far your thoughtful and sagacious words
 Have hit the facts But 'tis no Irish bay
 The villains aim to drop their anchors in,
 * My word for it they make the Wessex shore,
 And this vast squadron handled by Vill'neuve
 Is meant to cloak the passage of their strength,
 Massed in those transports—we being kept elsewhere
 By feigning forces —Good God, Collingwood,
 I must be gone! Yet two more days remain
 Ere I can get away—I must be gone!

COLLINGWOOD

Wherever you may go to, my dear lord,
 You carry victory with you Let them launch,
 Your name will blow them back, as south-west gales
 The gulls that beat against them from the shore

NELSON

Good Collingwood, I know you trust in me,
 But ships are ships, and do not kindly come
 Out of the slow docks of the Admiralty
 Like wharfside pigeons when they are whistled for —
 And there's a damned disparity of force,
 Which means tough work awhile for you and me!

The Spirit of the Years whispers to NELSON

And I have warnings, warnings, Collingwood,
 That my effective hours are shortening here,
 Strange warnings now and then, as 'twere within me,
 Which, though I fear them not, I recognize!
 However, by God's help, I'll live to meet
 These foreign boasters, yea, I'll finish them,
 And then—well, Gunner Death may finish me!

COLLINGWOOD

View not your life so gloomily, my lord
 One charmed, a needed purpose to fulfil!

NELSON

Ah, Coll Lead bullets are not all that wound
 I have a feeling here of dying fires,

A sense of strong and deep unworded censure,
 Which, compassing about my private life,
 Makes all my public service lustreless
 In my own eyes — I fear I am much condemned
 For those dear Naples and Palermo days,
 And he who was the sunshine of them all !
 He who is with himself dissatisfied,
 Though all the world find satisfaction in him,
 Is like a rainbow-coloured bird gone blind,
 That gives delight it shares not Happiness ?
 It's the philosopher's stone no alchemy
 Shall light on in this world I am weary of —
 Smiling I'd pass to my long home to-morrow
 Could I with honour, and my country's gain
 — But let's adjourn I waste your hours ashore
 By such ill-timed confessions !

They pass out of sight, and the scene closes

SCENE II

OFF FERROI

The French and Spanish combined squadrons On board the French
 admiral's flag-ship VILLENEUVE is discovered in his cabin writing a letter

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*He pens in fits, with pallid restlessness,
 Like one who sees Misfortune walk the wave
 And can nor face nor flee it*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He indites
 To his long friend the minister Decrès
 Words that go heavily !*

VILLENEUVE (writing)

" I am made the arbiter in vast designs
 Whereof I see black outcomes Do I this
 Or do I that, success, that loves to jilt
 Her anxious wooer for some careless blade,
 Will not reward me For, if I must pen it,

Demoralized past prayer is the marine—
 Bad masts, bad sails, bad officers, bad men,
 We cling to naval technics long outworn,
 And time and opportunity do not avail me
 To take up new I have long suspected such,
 But till I saw my helps, the Spanish ships,
 I hoped somewhat—Brest is my nominal port,
 Yet if so, Calder will again attack—
 Now reinforced by Nelson or Cornwallis—
 And shatter my whole fleet Shall I admit
 That my true inclination and desire
 Is to make Cadiz straightway, and not Brest?
 Alas! thereby I fail the Emperor,
 But shame the navy less—

Your friend, VILLENEUVE "

GENERAL LAURISTON enters

LAURISTON

Admiral, my missive to the Emperor,
 Which I shall speed by special courier
 From Ferrol this near eve, runs thus and thus—
 "Gravina's ships, in Ferrol here at hand,
 Embayed but by a temporary wind,
 Are all we now await Combined with these
 We sail herefrom to Brest, there promptly give
 Cornwallis battle, and release Ganteaume,
 Thence, all united, bearing Channelwards
 A step that sets in motion the first wheel
 In the proud project of your Majesty
 Now to be engined to the very close,
 To wit that a French fleet shall enter in
 And hold the Channel four-and-twenty hours"—
 Such clear assurance to the Emperor
 That our intent is modelled on his will
 I hasten to dispatch to him forthwith¹

VILLENEUVE

Yes, Lauriston I sign to every word

LAURISTON goes out VILLENEUVE remains at his table in reverie

¹ Through this tangle of intentions the writer has in the main followed Thiers, whose access to documents would seem to authenticate his details of the famous scheme for England's ruin

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*We may impress him under visible shapes
That seem to shed a silent circling doom,
He's such an one as can be so impressed,
And this much is among our privileges,
Will bounded as thy be*

The Spirits of the Years and of the Pities take the form of white sea birds, which alight on the stern balcony of VILLENEUVE'S ship immediately outside his cabin window. VILLENEUVE after a while looks up and sees the birds watching him with large piercing eyes

VILLENEUVE

My apprehensions even outstep their cause,
As though some influence smote through yonder pane
He gazes listlessly and resumes his broodings
——Why dared I not disclose to him my thought,
As nightly worded by the whistling shrouds,
That Brest will never see our battled hulls
Helming to north in pomp of cannonry
To take the front in this red pilgrimage!
——If so it were, now, that I'd screen my skin
From risks of bloody business in the blunt,
My acts could scarcely wear a difference
Yet I would die to-morrow—not ungladly—
So far removed is carcase-care from me
For no self do these apprehensions spring,
But for the cause—Yes, rotten is our marine,
Which, while I know, the Emperor knows not,
And the pale secret chills! Though some there be
Would beard contingencies and buffet all,
I'll not command a course so conscienceless
Rather I'll stand, and face Napoleon's rage
When he shall learn what mean the ambiguous lines
That facts have forced from me

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of the Years)

*O Eldest born of the Unconscious Cause—
If such thou beest, as I can fancy thee—
Why dost thou rack him thus? Consistency
Might be preserved, and yet his doom remain,
His olden courage is without reproach,
Albeit his temper trends toward gangriving!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I say, as I have said long heretofore,
 I know but narrow freedom Feel'st thou not
 We are in Its hand, as he?—Here, as elsewhere,
 'We do but as we may, no further dare*

The birds disappear and the scene is lost behind sea mist

SCENE III

THE CAMP AND HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

The English coast in the distance Near the Tour d'Ordre stands a hut,
 with sentinels and aides outside, it is NAPOLÉON'S temporary lodging when
 not at his headquarters at the Chateau of Pont-de-Briques two miles inland

DUMB SHOW

A courier arrives with dispatches and enters the Emperor's quarters,
 whence he emerges and goes on with other dispatches to the hut of DECÈRES,
 lower down. Immediately after, NAPOLÉON comes out from his hut with a
 paper in his hand, and musingly proceeds towards an eminence commanding
 the Channel.

Along the shore below are forming in a far-reaching line more than a
 hundred thousand infantry. On the downs in the rear of the camps fifteen
 thousand cavalry are manœuvring, their accoutrements flashing in the sun
 like a school of mackerel. The flotilla lies in and around the port, alive with
 moving figures.

With his head forward and his hands behind him the Emperor surveys
 these animated proceedings in detail but more frequently turns his face
 towards the telegraph on the cliff to the south-west erected to signal when
 VILLENEUVE and the combined squadrons shall be visible on the west
 horizon.

He summons one of the aides who descends to the hut of DECÈRES.
 DECÈRES comes out from his hut and hastens to join the Emperor. Dumb
 show ends.

NAPOLÉON and DECÈRES advance to the foreground of the scene.

NAPOLÉON

Decrès, this action with Sir Robert Calder
 Three weeks ago, whereof we dimly heard,
 And clear details of which I have just unsealed,
 Is on the whole auspicious for our plan.
 It seems that twenty of our ships and Spain's—
 None over eighty-gunned, and some far less—
 Engaged the English off Cape Finisterre
 With fifteen vessels of a hundred each

We coolly fought and orderly as they,
 And, but for mist, we had closed with victory
 Two English were much mauled, some Spanish damaged,
 And Calder then diew off with his two wrecks
 And Sprün's in tow, we giving chase forthwith
 Not overtaking him our admiral,
 Having the coast clear for his purposes,
 Entered Coruña, and found orders there
 To open the port of Brest and come on hither
 Thus hastes the moment when the double fleet
 Of Villeneuve and of Ganteaume should appear

He looks again towards the telegraph

DECRÈS (with hesitation)

And should they not appear, your Majesty?

NAPOLÉON

Not? But they will, and do it early, too!
 There's nothing hinders them My God, they must,
 For I have much before me when this stroke
 At England's dealt I learn from Talleyrand
 That Austrian preparations threaten hot,
 While Russia's hostile schemes are ripening,
 And shortly must be met—My plan is fixed
 I am prepared for each alternative
 If Villeneuve come, I brave the British coast,
 Convulse the land with fear ('tis even now
 So far distraught, that generals cast about
 To find new modes of warfare, yea, design
 Carriages to transport their infantry!)—
 Once on the English soil I hold it firm,
 Descend on London, and the while my men
 Salute the dome of Paul's I cut the knot
 Of all Pitt's coalitions, setting free
 From bondage to a cold manorial caste
 A people who await it

They stand and regard the chalky cliffs of England, till NAPOLÉON
 resumes

Should it be

Even that my admirals fail to keep the tyst—
 A thing scarce thinkable, when all's reviewed—
 I strike this seaside camp, cross Germany,

With these two hundred thousand seasoned men,
 And pause not till within Vienna's walls
 I cry checkmate Next, Venice, too, being taken,
 And Austria's other holdings down that way,
 The Bourbons also driven from Italy,
 I strike at Russia—each in turn, you note,
 Ere they can act conjoined

Report to me
 What has been scanned to-day upon the main,
 And on your passage down request them there
 To send Daru this way

DECRÈS (as he withdraws)

The Emperor, can be sanguine Scarce can I
 His letters are more promising than mine
 Alas, alas, Villeneuve, my dear old friend,
 Why do you pen me this at such a time !

[He retires reading VILLENEUVE'S letter

The Emperor walks up and down till DARU, his private secretary joins him

NAPOLÉON

Come quick, Daru, sit down upon the grass,
 And write whilst I am in mind

First to Villeneuve —

"I trust, Vice-Admiral, that before this date
 Your fleet has opened Brest, and gone If not,
 These lines will greet you there But pause not, pray
 Waste not a moment dallying Sail away
 Once bring my coupled squadrons Channelwards
 And England's soil is ours All's ready here,
 The troops alert, and every store embarked
 Hold the high sea but four and-twenty hours
 And our vast end is gained"

Now to Ganteaume —

"My telegraphs will have made known to you
 My object and desire to be but this,
 That you forbid Villeneuve to lose an hour
 In getting fit and putting forth to sea,
 To profit by the fifty first-rate craft
 Wherewith I now am bettered Quickly weigh,
 And steer you for the Channel with all your strength

I count upon your well-known character,
Your enterprise, your vigour, to do this
Sail hither, then, and we will be avenged
For centuries of despoil and contumely "

DARU

Shall a fair transcript, Sue, be made forthwith ?

NAPOLÉON

This moment And the courier will depart
And travel without pause

DARU goes to his office a little lower down, and the Emperor lingers on the cliffs looking through his glass

The point of view shifts across the Channel, the Boulogne cliffs sinking behind the water-line

SCENE IV

SOUTH WESSEX A RIDGE-LIKE DOWN NEAR THE COAST

The down commands a wide view over the English Channel in front of it including the popular Royal watering place, with the Isle of Slingers and its roadstead where men-of-war and frigates are anchored. The hour is ten in the morning and the July sun glows upon a large military encampment round about the foreground, and warms the stone field walls that take the place of hedges here

Artillery, cavalry, and infantry, English and Hanoverian, are drawn up for review under the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND and officers of the staff, forming a vast military array, which extends three miles and as far as the downs are visible

In the centre by the Royal Standard appears KING GEORGE on horse back and his suite. In a coach drawn by six cream coloured Hanoverian horses QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits with three Princesses, in another carriage with four horses are two more Princesses. There are also present with the Royal Party the LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD MULGRAVE, COUNT MUNSTER and many other luminaries of fashion and influence

The Review proceeds in dumb show, and the din of many bands mingles with the cheers. The turf behind the saluting point is crowded with carriages and spectators on foot

A SPECTATOR

And you've come to see the sight, like the King and myself ?
Well, one fool makes many. What a mampus o' folk it is here to-day ! And what a time we do live in, between wais and wassailings, the goölin o' Boney, and King George in flesh and blood !

SECOND SPECTATOR

Yes I wonder King George is let venture down on this coast, where he might be snapped up in a moment like a minney by a hei'n, so near as we be to the field of Boney's vagaries! Begad, he's as like to land here as anywhere Gloucester Lodge could be surrounded, and George and Chalotte carried off before he could put on his hat, or she her red cloak and pattens!

THIRD SPECTATOR

'Twould be no such joke to kidnap 'em as you think Look at the frigates down there Every night they are drawn up in a line across the mouth of the Bay, almost touching each other, and ashore a double line of sentinels, well primed with beer and ammunition, one at the water's edge, and the other on the Esplanade, stretch along the whole front Then close to the Lodge a guard is mounted after eight o'clock, there be pickets on all the hills, at the Harbour mouth is a battery of twenty four-pounders, and over-right 'em a dozen six-pounders, and several howitzers And next look at the size of the camp of horse and foot up here

FIRST SPECTATOR

Everybody however was fairly galled this week when the King went out yachting, meaning to be back for the theatre, and the time passed, and it got dark, and the play couldn't begin, and eight or nine o'clock came, and never a sign of him I don't know when 'a did land, but 'twas said by all that it was a fool-hardy pleasure to take

FOURTH SPECTATOR

He's a very obstinate and comical old gentleman, and by all account 'a wouldn't make port when asked to

SECOND SPECTATOR

Lard, Lard, if 'a were nabbed, it wouldn't make a deal of difference! We should have nobody to zing to, and play single-stick to, and gun at through horse-collars, that's true And nobody to sign our few documents But we should rub along some way, goodnow

FIRST SPECTATOR

Step up on this barrow, you can see better The troopers now passing are the York Hussars—foreigners to a man, except

the officers—the same regiment the two young Geimans belonged to who were shot here four years ago. Now come the Light Dragoons, what a time they take to get all past! See, the King turns to speak to one of his notables. Well, well! this day will be recorded in history.

SECOND SPECTATOR

O! another soon to follow it! (He gazes over the Channel) There's not a speck of an enemy upon that shiny water yet, but the Brest fleet is said to have put to sea, to act in concert with the army crossing from Boulogne, and if so the French will soon be here, when God save us all! I've took to drinking neat, for, says I, one may as well have his innards burnt out as shot out, and 'tis a good deal pleasanter for the man that owns 'em. They say that a cannon ball knocked poor Jim Popple's maw right up into the futtock-shrouds at the Nile, where 'a hung like a nightcap out to dry. Much good to him his obeying his old mother's wish and refusing his allowance o' rum!

The bands play and the Review continues till past eleven o'clock. Then follows a sham fight. At noon precisely the royal carriages draw off the ground into the highway that leads down to the town and Gloucester Lodge, followed by other equipages in such numbers that the road is blocked. A multitude comes after on foot. Presently the vehicles manage to proceed to the watering place and the troops march away to the various camps as a sea-mist cloaks the perspective.

SCENE V

THE SAME RAINBARROWS' BEACON, EGDON HEATH

Night in mid August of the same summer. A lofty ridge of heathland reveals itself dimly, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition the other of wood for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imports a sense of uninterrupted space around the view by day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the Valley of the Frome to the ridge that screens the Channel.

Two men with pikes loom up, on duty as beacon keepers beside the ricks.

OLD MAN

Now, Jems Pufchess, once more mark my words! Black on is the point we've to watch, and not Kingsbere, and I'll tell 'ee

for why If he do land anywhere hereabout 'twill be inside Deadman's Bay, and the signal will straightway come from Black'on But there thou'lt stand, glowing and staring with all thy eyes at Kingsbere! I tell 'ee what 'tis, Jem Puchess, your brain is softening, and you be getting too daft for business of state like ours!

YOUNG MAN

You've let your tongue wrack your new frames of good breeding, John

OLD MAN

The words of my Lord-Lieutenant was, whenever you see Kingsbere-Hill Beacon fired to the eastward, or Black'on to the westward, light up, and keep your second fire burning for two hours Was that our documents or was 't not?

YOUNG MAN

I don't gainsay it And so I keep my eye on Kingsbere, because that's most likely o' the two, says I

OLD MAN

That shows the curious depths of your ignorance However, I'll have patience, and say on Didst ever learn geography?

YOUNG MAN

No Nor no other corrupt practices

OLD MAN

Tcht tcht!—Well, I'll have patience, and put it to him in another form Dost know the world is round—eh? I warrant doasn't!

YOUNG MAN

I warrant I do!

OLD MAN

How d'ye make that out, when th'rt never been to school?

YOUNG MAN

I larned it at church, thank God

OLD MAN

Church? What have God A'mighty got to do with profane knowledge? Beware that you baint blaspheming, Jems Puchess!

YOUNG MAN

I say I did, whether or no! 'Twas the zingeis up in gallery that I had it from. They busted out that strong with "the ound world and they that dwell therein," that we common fokes down under could do no less than believe 'em

OLD MAN

Canst be shaip enough in the wrong place as usual—I wairant canst! However, I'll have patience with 'en, and say on!—Suppose, now, my hat is the world, and there, as might be, stands the Camp of Belong, where Boney is. The world goes round, so, and Belong goes ound too. Twelve hous pass, round goes the world still—so. Where's Belong now?

A pause. Two other figures, a man s and a woman s, rise against the sky out of the gloom.

OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

Who goes there? Friend or foe, in the King's name!

WOMAN

Piece o' trumpey! "Who goes" yourself! What d'ye talk o', John Whiting! Can't your eyes earn their living any longer, then, that you don't know your own neighbours? 'Tis Private Cantle of the Locals and his wife Keziar, down at Bloom's-End—who else should it be!

OLD MAN (lowering his pike)

A foim o' words, Mis'ess Cantle, no more, ordained by his Majesty's Gover'ment to be spoke by all we on sworn duty for the defence o' the country. Strict rank-and-file rules is our only horn of salvation in these times—But, my dear woman, why ever have ye come lumpering up to Rambariows at this time o' night?

WOMAN

We've been troubled with bad dreams, owing to the firing out at sea yesterday, and at last I could sleep no more, feeling sure that sommat boded of His coming. And I said to Cantle, I'll ray myself, and go up to Beacon, and ask if anything have been heard or seen to-night. And here we be.

OLD MAN

Not a sign or sound—all's as still as a churchyard And how
is your good man?

PRIVATE (advancing)

Clk! I be all right! I was in the ranks, helping to keep
the ground at the review by the King this week We was a
wonderful sight—wonderful! The King said so again and again
—Yes, there was he, and there was I, though not daring to
move a' eyebrow in the presence of Majesty I have come home
on a night's leave—off there again to morrow Boney's expected
every day, the Lord be praised! Yes, our hopes are to be ful-
filled soon, as we say in the army

OLD MAN

There, there, Cantle, don't ye speak quite so large, and
stand so over-upright Your back is as holler as a fire dog's
Do ye suppose that we on active service here don't know war
news? Mind you don't go taking to your heels when the next
alarm comes, as you did at last year's

PRIVATE

That had nothing to do with fighting, for I'm as bold as a lion
when I'm up, and "Shoulder Fawlocks!" sounds as common as
my own name to me 'Twas—— (Lowering his voice) Have ye
heard?

OLD MAN

To be sure we have

PRIVATE

Ghastly, isn't it!

OLD MAN

Ghastly! Frightful!

YOUNG MAN (to Private)

He don't know what it is! That's his pride and puffery
What is it that's so ghastly—hey?

PRIVATE

Well, there, I can't tell it 'Twas that that made the whole
eighty of our company run away—though we, be the bravest of
the brave in natural jeopardies, or the little boys wouldn't run
after us and call us the "Bang-up-Locals"

WOMAN (in undertones)

I can tell you a word or two on't It is about His victuals
They say that He lives upon human flesh, and has rasheirs o'
baby every morning for breakfast—for all the world like the
Cernel Giant in old ancient times !

YOUNG MAN

Ye can't believe all ye hear

PRIVATE

I only believe half And I only own—such is my challengeful
character—that perhaps He do eat pagan infants when He's in
the desert But not Christian ones at home Oh no—'tis
too much

WOMAN

Whether or no, I sometimes—God forgie me'—laugh wi'
horror at the queerness o't, till I am that weak I can hardly go
round house He should have the washing of 'em a few times ,
I warrant 'a wouldn't want to eat babies any moie !

A silence, during which they gaze around at the dark dome of starless sky

YOUNG MAN

There'll be a change in the weather soon, by the look o't I
can hear the cows moo in Froom Valley as if I were close to 'em,
and the lantern at Max Turnpike is shining quite plain

OLD MAN

Well, come in and taste a diop o' sommat we've got here,
that will warm the cockles of your heart as ye wamble homealong
We housed eighty tubs last night for them that shan't be named
—landed at Lullwind Cove the night afore, though they had a
narrow shave with the riding officers this run

They mike towards the hut, where a light on the west horizon becomes
visible, and quickly enlarges

YOUNG MAN

He's come !

OLD MAN

Come he is, though you do say it ! This, then, is the
beginning of what England's waited for !

They stand and watch the light awhile

YOUNG MAN

Just what you was praising the Lord for by now, Private Cantle

PRIVATE

My meaning was——

WOMAN (simpering)

Oh that I hadn't married a fiery sojer, to make me bring
fatherless children into the world, all through his dreadful calling !
Why didn't a man of no sprawl content me !

OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

We can't heed your innocent platings any longer, good
neighbours, being in the King's service, and a hot invasion on
Fall in, fall in, mite Straight to the tinder-box Quick march !

The two men hasten to the hut and are heard striking a flint and steel
Returning with a lit lantern they ignite a wisp of furze and with this set the
first stack of fuel in a blaze The private of the Locals and his wife hastily
retreat by the light of the flaming beacon under which the purple rotundities
of the hearth show like bronze and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull

SPIRIT SINISTER

This is good, and spells blood (To the Chorus of the Years) *I*
assume that It means to let us carry out this invasion with pleas-
ing slaughter, so as not to disappoint my hope ?

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

We carry out ? *Nay, but should we*
Ordain what bloodshed is to be !

SEMICHORUS II

The Immanent, that urgeth all,
Rules what may or may not befall !

SEMICHORUS I

Ere systemed suns were globed and lit
The slaughters of the race were writ,

SEMICHORUS II

And wasting wars, by land and sea,
Fixed, like all else, immutably !

SPIRIT SINISTER

Well, be it so My argument is that War makes rattling good history but Peace is poor reading So I back Bonaparte for the reason that he will give pleasure to posterity

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Gross hypocrite !

CHORUS OF THE YEARS

We comprehend him not

The day breaks over the heathery upland, on which the beacon is still burning The morning reveals the white surface of a highway which, coming from the royal watering-place beyond the hills, stretches towards the outskirts of the heath and passes away eastward

DUMB SHOW

Moving figures and vehicles dot the surface of the road, all progressing in one direction away from the coast In the foreground the shapes appear as those of civilians mostly on foot but many in gigs and tradesmen's carts and on horseback When they reach an intermediate hill some pause and look back, others enter on the next decline landwards without turning their heads

From the opposite horizon numerous companies of volunteers, in the local uniform of red with green facings¹ are moving coastwards in companies, as are also irregular bodies of pikemen without uniform, while on the upper slopes of the downs towards the shore regiments of the line are visible, with cavalry and artillery, all passing over to the coast

At a signal from the Chief Intelligences two Phantoms of Rumour enter on the highway in the garb of country men

FIRST PHANTOM (to Pedestrians)

Whither so fast, good neighbours, and before breakfast, too ? Empty bellies be bad to vamp on

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (laden with a pack, and speaking breathlessly)

He's landed west'ard, out by Abbot's Beach And if you have property you'll save it and yourselves, as we are doing !

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

All yesterday the firing at Boulogne

Was like the seven thunders heard in Heaven.

¹ These historic facings, which, I believe, won for the local (old 39th) regiment the nickname of "Green Linnet", have been changed for no apparent reason (They are now restored — 1909)

When the fierce angel spoke So did he draw
Men's eyes that way, the while his thousand boats
Full manned, flat-bottomed for the shallowest shore,
Dropped down to west, and crossed our frontage here
Seen from above they specked the water-shine
As will a flight of swallows towards dim eve,
Descending on a smooth and loitering stream
To seek some eyot's sedge

SECOND PHANTOM

*We are sent to enlighten you and ease your souls
Even now a courier conters to the port
To check the baseless scare*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (to Second Pedestrian)

These be inland men who, I warrant 'ee, don't know a leet
from a lighter! Let's take no heed of such, comrade and
hurry on!

FIRST PHANTOM

*Will you not hear
That what was seen behind the midnight mist,
Their oar blades tossing twinkles to the moon,
Was but a fleet of fishing-craft belated
By reason of the vastness of their haul?*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

Hey? And d'ye know it?—Now I look back to the top o'
Rudgeway the folk do seem as come to a pause there—Be this
true, never again do I stir my stumps for any alarm short of the
Day of Judgment! Nine times has my rheumatical rest been
broke in these last three years by hues and cries of Boney
upon us 'Od rot the feller, now he's made a fool of me once
more, till my inside is like a wash-tub, what w' being so galled,
and running so leely!—But how if you be one of the enemy,
sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings,
and coax us into a fancied safety? Hev, neighbours? I don't,
after all, care for this story!

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

Onwards again !
 If Boncy's come, 'tis best to be away,
 And if he's not, why, we've a holiday !

[Exeunt Pedestrians]

The Spirits of Rumour vanish, while the scene seems to become involved
 in the smoke from the beacon, and slowly disappears ¹

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

BOULOGNE THE CHATEAU AT PONT-DE-BRIQUES

A room in the Chateau, which is used as the Imperial quarters. The
 EMPEROR NAPOLEON and M GASPARD MONGE, the mathematician and
 philosopher, are seated at breakfast

Enter the officer in attendance

OFFICER

Monsieur the Admiral Decrès awaits
 A moment's audience with your Majesty,
 Or now, or later

NAPOLEON

Bid him in at once—

At last Villeneuve has raised the Brest blockade !

Enter DECRES

What of the squadrons' movements, good Decrès ?
 Brest opened, and all sailing Channelwards,
 Like swans into a creek at feeding-time ?

DECRES

Such news was what I'd hoped, your Majesty,
 To send across this daybreak. But events
 Have proved intractable, it seems, of late,
 And hence I haste in person to report
 The fearless facts that just have dashed my—

¹ The remains of the lonely hut occupied by the beacon keepers, consisting of some half buried brickbat, and a little mound of peat overgrown with moss, are still visible on the elevated spot referred to. The two keepers themselves, and their eccentricities and sayings, are traditional, with a slight disguise of names.

NAPOLÉON (darkening)

Well ?

DECRÈS

Sire, at the very juncture when the fleets
Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard
"L'Achille" and "l'Algeciras" later on,
Mischief assailed our Spanish comrades' ships,
Several ran foul of neighbours, whose new hulls,
Being added to their innate clumsiness,
Gave hap the upper hand, and in quick course
Demoralized the whole, until Villeneuve,
Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode,
And prescient of unparalleled disaster
If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim,
Bowed to the inevitable, and thus, perforce,
Leaving to other opportunity
Brest and the Channel scheme, with vast regret
Steered southward into Cadiz

NAPOLÉON (having risen from the table)

What !—Is, then,

My scheme of years to be disdained and dashed
By this man's like, a wretched moral coward,
Whom you must needs foist on me as one fit
For full command in pregnant enterprise !

MONGE (aside)

I'm one too many here ! Let me step out
Till this black squall blows over Poor Decrès
Would that this precious project, disinterred
From naval archives of King Louis' reign,
Had ever lingered fustling where 'twas found !¹

[Exit MONGE]

NAPOLÉON

To help a friend you foul a country's fame !—
Decres, not only chose you this Villeneuve,
But you have nourished secret sour opinions
Akin to his, and thereby helped to scathe

¹ "Le projet existait encore aux archives de la marine que Napoléon consultait incessamment il sentait que cette marine depuis Louis XIV avait fait de grandes choses le plan de l'expédition d'Egypte et de la descente en Angleterre se trouvaient au ministère de la marine." — CAHIEREUX *L'Europe pendant le Consulat et l'Empire*

As stably based a project as this age
 Has sunned to ripeness Ever the French marine
 Have you decuded, ever contrived to bring
 Despair into the fleet ! Why, this Villeneuve,
 Your man, this rank incompetent, this traitor—
 Of whom I asked no more than fight and lose,
 Provided he detained the enemy—
 A frigate is too great for his command !
 What shall be said of one who, at a breath,
 When a few casual sailors find them sick,
 When falls a broken boom or slitten sail,
 When rumour hints that Calder's tubs and Nelson's
 May join, and bob about in company,
 Is straightway paralyzed, and doubles back
 On all his ripened plans !—
 Bring him, ay, bodily, hale him out from Cadiz,
 Compel him up the Channel by main force,
 And, having doffed him his supreme command,
 Give the united squadrons to Ganteaume !

DECRÈS

Your Majesty while umbraged, righteously,
 By an event my tongue dragged dry to tell,
 Makes my hard situation over-hard
 By your ascension to the actors in't
 Of motives such and such 'Tis not for me
 To answer these reproaches, Sir, and ask
 Why years-long mindfulness of France's fame
 In things marine should win no confidence
 I speak, but am unable to convince !
 True is it that this man has been my friend
 Since boyhood made us schoolmates, and I say
 That he would yield the heel drops of his heart
 With joyful readiness this day, this hour,
 To do his country service Yet no less
 Is it his drawback that he sees too far
 And there are times, Sir, when a shorter sight
 Charms Fortune more A certain sort of bravery
 Some people have—to wit, this same Lord Nelson—
 Which is but fatuous faith in one's own star
 Sworn to the very verge of childishness,
 (Smugly disguised as putting trust in God,

A habit with these English folk), wherebv
 A headstrong blindness to contingencies
 Carries the actor on, and serves him well
 In some nice issues clearer sight would mar
 Such eyeless bravery Villeneuve has not,
 But, Sir, he is no coward

NAPOLÉON

Well, have it so!—What are we going to do?
 My brain has only one wish—to succeed!

DECELS

My voice wanes weaker with you, Sir, is nought!
 Yet these few words, as Minister of Marine,
 I'll venture now—My process would be thus—
 Our projects for a junction of the fleets
 Being well-discerned and read by every eye
 Through long postponement, England is prepared
 I would recast them—Later in the year
 Form sundry squadrons of this massive one,
 Harass the English till the winter time,
 Then rendezvous at Cadiz, where leave half
 To catch the enemy's eye and call their cruizers,
 While, rounding Scotland with the other half,
 You make the Channel by the eastern strait,
 Cover the passage of our army boats,
 And plant the blow

NAPOLÉON

And what if they perceive
 Our Scottish route, and meet us eastwardly?

DECELS

I have thought of it, and planned a countermove,
 I'll write the scheme more clearly and at length,
 And send it hither to your Majesty

NAPOLÉON

Do so forthwith, and send me in Daru

Exit DECELS Re-enter MONGE

Our breakfast, Monge, to-day has been cut short,
 And those discussions on the ancient tongues
 Wherein you shine, must yield to modern moils
 Nay, hasten not away, though feeble wills,

Incompetence, ay, imbecility,
 In some who feign to serve the cause of France,
 Do make me other than myself just now !—
 Ah—here's DARU

DARU enters MONGE takes his leave

DARU, sit down and write Yes, here, at once,
 This room will serve me now What think you, eh ?
 Villeneuve has just turned tail and run to Cadiz,
 So quite postponed—perhaps even overthrown—
 My long-conned project against yonder shore
 As 'twere a juvenile's snow-built device
 But made for melting ! Think of it, Daru,—
 My God, my God, how can I talk thereon !
 A plan well judged, well charted, well upreared,
 To end in nothing ! Sit you down and write
 NAPOLÉON walks up and down, and resumes after a silence
 Write this —A volte-face 'tis indeed !—Write, write !

DARU (holding pen to paper)

I wait, your Majesty

NAPOLÉON

First Bernadotte—

Yes, "Bernadotte moves out from Hanover
 Through Hesse upon Wurzburg and the Danube —
 Marmont from Holland bears along the Rhine,
 And joins at Mainz and Wurzburg Bernadotte
 While these prepare their routes the army here
 Will turn its rump on Britain's tedious shore,
 And, closing up with Augereau at Brest,
 Set out full force due eastward
 By the Black Forest feign a straight attack,
 The while our purpose is to skit its left,
 Meet in Franconia Bernadotte and Marmont,
 Traverse the Danube somewhat down from Ulm,
 Entrap the Austrian columns by their rear,
 Surround them, cleave them, roll upon Vienna,
 Where, Austria settled, I engage the Tsar,
 While Masséna detains in Italy
 The Archduke Charles

Foreseeing such might shape,
 Each high- and by-way to the Danube hence
 I have of late had measured, mapped, and judged,
 Such spots as suit for depots chosen and marked,
 Each regiment's daily pace and bivouac
 Writ tablewise for ready reference,
 All which itineraries are sent herewith "

So shall I crush the two gigantic sets
 Upon the Empire, now grown imminent
 —Let me reflect —First Bernadotte——But nay,
 The courier to Marmont must go first
 Well, well —The order of our march from hence
 I will advise My knock at George's door
 With bland inquiries why his royal hand
 Withheld due answer to my friendly lines,
 And tossed the irksome business to his clerks,
 Is thus perforce delayed But not for long
 Instead of crossing, thitherward I turn
 By roundabout contrivance not less sure !

DARU

I'll bring the writing to your Majesty

NAPOLÉON and DARU go out severally

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Recording Angel, trace
 This bold campaign his thought has spun apace—
 One that bids fair for immortality
 Among the earthlings—if immortal deeds
 May be ascribed to so extemporary
 And transient a race !
 It will be called, in rhetoric and rhyme,
 As son to sire succeeds,
 A model for the tactics of all time,
 "The Great Campaign of that so famed year Five,"
 By millions of mankind not yet alive*

SCENE II

THE FRONTIERS OF UPPER AUSTRIA AND BAVARIA

A view of the country from mid air, at a point south of the River Inn which is seen as a silver thread winding northward between its junction with the Salza and the Danube, and forming the boundaries of the two countries

The Danube shows itself as a crinkled satin riband, stretching from left to right in the far back ground of the picture, the Inn discharging its waters into the larger river

DUMB SHOW

A vast Austrian army creeps dully along the mid-distance, in the form of detached masses and columns of a whitish cast. The columns insensibly draw nearer to each other, and are seen to be converging from the east upon the banks of the Inn towards

A RECORDING ANGEL (in recitative)

*This movement as of molluscs on a leaf,
Which from our vantage here we scan afar,
Is one manœuvred by the famous Mack
To countercheck Napoleon, still believed
To be intent on England from Boulogne,
And heedless of such rallies in his rear
Mack's enterprise is now to cross Bavaria—
Beneath us stretched in ripening summer peace
As field unwarred for these ugly jars—
And seize on Ulm, past Swabia leftward there
Outraged Bavaria, simmering in disgust
At Munich down behind us, Isar-fringed,
And torn between his fair wife's hate of France
And his own itch to gird at Austrian bluff
For riding roughshod through his territory,
Wavers from this to that. The while Time hastes
The eastward streaming of Napoleon's host,
As soon we see*

The silent insect-creep of the Austrian columns towards the banks of the Inn continues to be seen till the view fades to nebulousness and dissolves

SCENE III

BOULOGNE THE ST OMER ROAD

It is a morning at the end of August, and the road stretches out of the town eastward

The divisions of the "Army-for-England" are making preparations to march. Some portions are in marching order. Bands strike up and the regiments start on their journey towards the Rhine and Danube. Bonaparte and his officers watch the movements from an eminence. The soldiers, as they pace along under their eagles with beaming eyes, sing "Le Chant du Départ" and other martial songs, shout "Vive l'Empereur!" and babble of repeating the days of Italy, Egypt, Marengo, and Hohenlinden.

NAPOLÉON

Anon to England !

CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES (aerial music)

If Time's weird threads so weave !

The scene as it lingers exhibits the gradual diminishing of the troops along the roads through the undulating August landscape, till each column is seen but as a train of dust, and the disappearance of each marching mass over the eastern horizon

ACT FOURTH

SCENE I

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX

A sunny day in autumn A room in the red-brick royal residence known as Gloucester Lodge¹

At a front triple-lighted window stands a telescope on a tripod Through the open middle sash is visible the crescent-curved expanse of the Bay as a sheet of brilliant translucent green on which ride vessels of war at anchor On the left hand white cliffs stretch away till they terminate in St Aldhelm's Head and form a background to the level water-line on that side In the centre are the open sea and blue sky A near headland rises on the right surmounted by a battery, over which appears the remote bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingers

In the foreground yellow sands spread smoothly whereon there are sundry temporary erections for athletic sports, and closer at hand runs an esplanade on which a fashionable crowd is promenading Immediately outside the Lodge are companies of soldiers groups of officers and sentries

Within the room the KING and PITT are discovered The KING's eyes show traces of recent inflammation and the Minister has a wasted look

KING

Yes, yes, I grasp your reasons, Mr Pitt,
And grant you audience gladly More than that,
Your visit to this shore is apt and timely,
And if it do but yield you needful rest
From fierce debate, and other strains of office
Which you and I in common have to bear,

¹ This weather beaten old building, though now an hotel, is but little altered

'Twill be well earned The bathing is unmatched
Elsewhere in Europe,—see its mark on me!—
The air like liquid life —But of this matter
What argue these late movements seen abroad?
What of the country now the session's past,
What of the country, eh? and of the war?

PITT

The thoughts I have laid before your Majesty
Would make for this, in sum —
That Mr Fox, Lord Grenville, and their friends,
Be straightway asked to join With Melville gone
With Sidmouth, and with Buckinghamshire too,
The steering of affairs has stood of late
Somewhat provisional, as you, sir, know,
With stop gap functions thrust on offices
Which common weal can tolerate but awhile
So, for the weighty reasons I have urged,
I do repeat my most respectful hope
To win your Majesty's ungrudged assent
To what I have proposed

KING

But nothing, sure,
Has been more plain to all, dear Mr Pitt,
Than that your own proved energy and scope
Is ample, without aid, to carry on
Our just crusade against this Corsican
Why, then, go calling Fox and Grenville in?
Such helps we need not Pray you think upon't
And speak to me again — We've had alarms
Making us skip like crackers at our heels,
That Bonaparte had landed close hereby

PITT

Such rumours come as regularly as harvest

KING

And now he has left Boulogne with all his host?
Was it his object to invade at all,
Or was his vast assemblage there a blind?

PITT

Undoubtedly he meant invasion, sir,
Had fortune favoured He may try it yet
And, as I said, could we but close with Fox——

KING

But, but,—I ask, what is his object now?
Lord Nelson's Captain—Hardy—whose old home
Stands in a peaceful vale hard by us here—
Who came two weeks ago to see his friends,
I talked to in this room a lengthy while
He says our navy still is in thick night
As to the aims by sea of Bonaparte
Now the Boulogne attempt has fizzled out,
And what he schemes afloat with Spain combined
The "Victory" lay that fortnight at Spithead,
And Nelson since has gone aboard and sailed,
Yes, sailed again The "Royal Sovereign" follows,
And others her Nelson was hailed and cheered
To huskiness while leaving Southsea shore,
Gentle and simple wildly thronging round

PITT

Ay, sir Young women hung upon his arm,
And old ones blessed, and stroked him with their hands

KING

Ah—you have heard, of course God speed him, Pitt

PITT

Amen, amen !

KING

I read it as a thing
Of signal augury, and one which bodes
Heaven's confidence in me and in my line,
That I should rule as King in such an age !
Well, well —So this new march of Bonaparte's
Was unexpected, forced perchance on him ?

PITT

It may be so, your Majesty, it may
Last noon the Austrian ambassador,

Whom I consulted ere I posted down,
 Assuied me that his latest papers woid
 How General Mack and eighty thousand men
 Have made good speed across Bavaria
 To wait the French and give them check at Ulm,
 That fortress frontier town, entrenched and walled,
 A place long chosen as a vantage-point
 Whereon to encounter them as they outwind
 From the blind shades and baffling green defiles
 Of the Black Forest, worn with wayfaring
 Here Mack will intercept his agile foe
 Hasting to meet the Russians in Bohemia,
 And cripple him, if not annihilate

Thus now, sir, opens out this Great Alliance
 Of Russia, Austria, England, whereto I
 Have lent my earnest efforts through long months,
 And the realm gives her money, ships, and men —
 It claps a muffler round this Cock's steel spurs,
 And leaves me sanguine on his overthrow
 But then,—this coalition of resources
 Demands a strong and active Cabinet
 To aid your Majesty's directive hand,
 And thus I urge again the said additions—
 These brilliant intellects of the other side
 Who stand by Fox With us conjoined, they——

KING

What, what, again—in face of my sound reasons!
 Believe me, Pitt, you underrate yourself,
 You do not need such aid The splendid feat
 Of banding Europe in a righteous cause
 That you have achieved, so soon to put to shame
 This wicked bombardier of dynasties
 That rule by right Divine, goes straight to prove
 We had best continue as we have begun,
 And call no partners to our management
 To fear dilemmas horning up ahead
 Is not your wont Nay, nay, now, Mr Pitt,
 I must be firm And if you love your King—
 You'll goad him not so rashly to embrace
 This Fox-and-Grenville faction and its friends

Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!
Hey, what? But what besides?

PITT

I say besides, sir, nothing!

A silence

KING (cheerfully)

The Chancellor's here, and many friends of mine Lady Winchelsea, Lord and Lady Chesterfield, Lady Bulkeley, General Garth, and Mr Phipps the oculist—not the least important to me. He is a worthy and a skilful man. My eyes, he says, are as marvellously improved in durability as I know them to be in power. I have arranged to go to-morrow with the Princesses, and the Dukes of Cumberland, Sussex, and Cambridge (who are also here) for a ride on the Ridgeway, and through the Camp on the downs. You'll accompany us there?

PITT

I am honoured by your Majesty's commands

PITT looks resignedly out of the window

What curious structure do I see outside, sir?

KING

It's but a stage, a type of all the world. The burgesses have arranged it in my honour. At six o'clock this evening there are to be combats at single stick to amuse the folk, four guineas the prize for the man who breaks most heads. Afterwards there is to be a gunning match through horse-collars—a very humorous sport which I must stay here and witness, for I am interested in whatever entertains my subjects.

PITT

Not one in all the land but knows it, sir

KING

Now, Mr Pitt, you must require repose,
Consult your own convenience then, I beg,
On when you leave

PITT

I thank your Majesty

He departs as one whose purpose has failed, and the scene shuts

SCENE II

BEFORE THE CITY OF ULM

A prospect of the city from the east, showing in the foreground a low-lying marshy country bounded in mid distance by the banks of the Danube, which, bordered by poplars and willows, flows across the picture from the left to the Elchingen Bridge near the right of the scene, and is backed by irregular heights and terraces of espaliered vines. Between these and the river stands the city crowded with old gabled houses and surrounded by walls, bastions, and a ditch all the edifices being dominated by the nave and tower of the huge Gothic Munster.

On the most prominent of the heights at the back—the Michaelsberg—to the upper-right of the view, is crimped the mass of the Austrian army amid half finished entrenchments. Advanced posts of the same are seen south-east of the city, not far from the advanced corps of the French Grand Army under SOULT, MARMONT, MURAT, LANNES, NEY, and DUPONT which occupy in a semicircle the whole breadth of the flat landscape in front, and extend across the river to higher ground on the right hand of the panorama.

Heavy mixed drifts of rain and snow are descending impartially on the French and on the Austrians, the downfall nearly blotting out the latter on the hills. A chill October wind wails across the country, and the poplars yield slantingly to the gusts.

DUMB SHOW

Dienched peasants are busily at work, fortifying the heights of the Austrian position in the face of the enemy. Vague companies of Austrians above, and of the French below, hazy and indistinct in the thick atmosphere, come and go without apparent purpose near their respective lines.

Closer at hand NAPOLÉON in his familiar blue grey overcoat, rides hither and thither with his marshals haranguing familiarly the bodies of soldiery as he passes them and observing and pointing out the disposition of the Austrians to his companions.

Thicker sheets of rain fly across as the muck of evening increases which at length entirely obscures the prospect, and cloaks its bleared lights and fires.

SCENE III

ULM WITHIN THE CITY

The interior of the Austrian headquarters on the following morning. A tempest raging without.

GENERAL MACK, haggard and anxious, the ARCHDUKE FERDINAND, PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG, GENERAL JELLACHICH, GENERALS RIESS, BIBERACH, and other field officers discovered, seated at a table with a map spread out before them. A wood fire blazes between tall andirons in a yawning fireplace. At every more than usually boisterous gust of wind the smoke flaps into the room.

MACK

The accursèd cunning of our adversary
Confounds all codes of honourable war,
Which ever have held as granted that the track
Of armies bearing hither from the Rhine—
Whether in peace or strenuous invasion—
Should pierce the Schwarzwald, and through Memmingen,
And meet us in our front But he must wind
And corkscrew meanly round, where foot of man
Can scarce find pathway, stealing up to us
Thiefwise, by our back door! Nevertheless,
If English war-fleets be abreast Boulogne,
As these deserters tell, and ripe to land there,
It destines Bonaparte to pack him back
Across the Rhine again We've but to wait,
And see him go

ARCHDUKE

But who shall say if these bright tales be true?

MACK

Even then, small matter, your Imperial Highness,
The Russians near us daily, and must soon—
Ay, far within the eight days I have named—
Be operating to untie this knot,
If we hold on

ARCHDUKE

Conjectures these—no more,
I stomach not such waiting Neither hope
Has kernel in it I and my cavalry
With caution, when the shadows fall to-night,
Can bore some hole in this engirdlement,
Outpass the gate north-east, join General Werneck,
And somehow cut our way Bohemia wards
Well worth the hazard, in our straitened case!

MACK (firmly)

The body of our force staves here with me
And I am much surprised, your Highness, much,
You mark not how destructive 'tis to part!
If we wait on, for certain we should wait
In our full strength, compacted, undispersed
By such partition as your Highness plans

SCHWARZENBERG

There's truth in urging we should not divide,
 But weld more closely—Yet why stay at all?
 Methinks there's but one sure salvation left,
 To wit, that we conjunctly march herefrom,
 And with much circumspection, towards the Tyrol
 The subtle often rack their wits in vain—
 Assay whole magazines of strategy—
 To shun ill doomings deemed insuperable,
 When simple souls by stumbling up to them
 Find the grim shapes but all—But let us grant
 That the investing French so ring us in
 As to leave not a span for such exploit,
 Then go we—throw ourselves upon their steel,
 And batter through, or die!—
 What say you, Generals? Speak your minds, I pray

JELLACHICH

I favour marching out—the Tyrol way

RIESC

Bohemia best! The route thereto is open

ARCHDUKE

My course is chosen—O this black campaign,
 Which Pitt's alarmed dispatches pricked us to,
 All unforeseeing! Any risk for me
 Rather than court humiliation here!

MACK has risen during the latter remarks, walked to the window, and looked out at the sun—He returns with an air of embarrassment

MACK (to Archduke)

It is my privilege firmly to submit
 That your Imperial Highness undertake
 No venturous vaulting into risks unknown—
 Assume that you, Sire, as you have proposed,
 With your light regiments and the cavalry,
 Detach yourself from us, to scoop a way
 By circuits northwards through the Rauhe Alps
 And Herdenheim, into Bohemia
 Reports all point that you will be attacked,
 Enveloped, borne on to capitulate

What worse can happen here ?—
 Remember, Sir, the Emperor deposes me,
 Should such a clash arise as has arisen,
 To exercise supreme authority
 The honour of our arms, our race, demands
 That none of your Imperial Highness' line
 Be pounded prisoner by this vulgar foe,
 Who is not France, but an adventurer
 Imposing on that country for his gain

ARCHDUKE

I amply recognize the deep disgrace
 Involving Austria if this upstart chief
 Should of his cunning seize and hold in pawn
 A royal-lineaged son, whose ancestors
 Root on the primal rocks of history

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Note that Five years, and legal brethren they—
 This feudal treasure and the upstart man !*

ARCHDUKE

But it seems clear to me that loitering here
 Is full as like to compass our surrender
 As moving hence And ill it therefore suits
 The mood of one of my high temperature
 To pause inactive while await me means
 Of desperate cure for these so desperate ills !

[The ARCHDUKE FLADINAND goes out,

A troubled silence follows during which the gusts call into the chimney,
 and raindrops spit on the fire

SCHWARZENBERG

The Archduke bears him shrewdly in this course
 We may as well look matters in the face,
 And that we are cooped and cornered is most clear,
 Clear is it, too, that but a miracle
 Can work to loose us ! I have stoutly held
 That this man's three years' ostentatious scheme
 To fling his army on the tempting shores
 Of our allies the English was a—well—
 Scarce other than a trick of thimble-rig
 To still us into false security

JELLACHICH

Well, I know nothing None needs list to me,
 But, on the whole, to southward seems the course
 For plunging, all in force, immediately

Another pause

SPIRIT SINISTER

*The Will throws Mack again in agitation
 Ho-ho—what he'll do now !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Nay, hard one, nay,
 The clouds weep for him !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*If he must he must,
 And it's good antic at a vacant time !*

MACK goes restlessly to the door and is heard pacing about the vestibule
 and questioning the aides and other officers gathered there

A GENERAL

He waves like this smoke-weath that inclines
 Or north, or south, as the storm-currents rule !

MACK (returning)

Bring that deserter hither once again

A French soldier is brought in, blindfolded and guarded The bandage is
 removed

Well, tell us what he says

AN OFFICER (after speaking to the prisoner in French)

He still repeats
 That the whole body of the British strength
 Is even now descending on Boulogne,
 And that self preservation must, of need,
 Clear us from Bonaparte ere many days,
 Who momentarily is moving

MACK

Still retain him

He walks to the fire, and stands looking into it The soldier is taken out

JELLACHICH (bending over the map in argument with RIESC)

I much prefer our self-won information,
And if we have Marshal Soult at Landsberg here,
(Which seems to be the truth, despite this man,)
And Dupont hard upon us at Albeck,
With Ney not far from Gunzburg, somewhere here,
Or further down the river, lurking Lannes,
Our game's to draw off southward—if we can!

MACK (turning)

I have it This we'll do You, Jellachich,
Unite with Spangen's troops at Memmingen,
To fend off mischief there And you, Riesc,
Will make your utmost haste to occupy
The bridge and upper ground at Elchingen,
And all along the left bank of the stream,
Till you observe whereon to concentrate
And sever their connections I couch here,
And hold the city till the Russians come

A GENERAL (in a low voice)

Disjunction seems of all expedients wisest
If any stay, then stay should every man,
Gather, enlace, and close up hip to hip,
And perk and bristle hedgehog-like with spines!

MACK

The conference is ended, friends, I say,
And orders will be issued here forthwith

Guns heard

AN OFFICER

Surely that's from the Michaelsberg above us?

MACK

Never care Here we stay In five more days
The Russians hail, and we regain our bays

[Exeunt severally

SCENE IV

BEFORE ULM THE SAME DAY

A high wind prevails and rain falls in torrents An elevated terrace near Elchingen forms the foreground

DUMB SHOW

From the terrace BONAPARTE surveys and dictates operations against the entrenched heights of the Michaelsberg that rise in the middle distance on the right above the city Through the gruze of descending waters the French soldiery can be discerned climbing to the attack under NEY

They slowly advance recede re advance halt A time of suspense follows Then they are seen in a state of irregular movement even confusion, but in the end they carry the heights with the bayonet

Below the spot whereon NAPOLLON and his staff are gathered, glistening wet and plastered with mud obtrudes on the left the village of Elchingen, now in the hands of the French Its white-walled monastery its bridge over the Danube, recently broken by the irresistible NEY wear a desolated look, and the stream which is swollen by the runoff and lashed by the storm, seems vainly to sympathize

Anon shells are dropped by the French from the summits they have gained into the city below A bomb from an Austrian battery falls near NAPOLLON, and in bursting raises a fountain of mud The Emperor retreats with his officers to a less conspicuous station

Meanwhile LANNES advances from a position near NAPOLLON till his columns reach the top of the Frauenberg hid by The united corps of LANNES and NEY descend on the inner slope of the heights towards the city walls in the rear of the retreating Austrians One of the French columns scales a bastion but NAPOLLON orders the assault to be discontinued, and with the wane of day the spectacle disappears

SCENE V

THE SAME THE MICHAELSBERG

A chilly but rainless noon three days later At the back of the scene northward, rise the Michaelsberg heights, below stretches the panorama of the city and the Danube On a secondary eminence forming a spur of the upper hill, a fire of logs is burning, the foremost group beside it being NAPOLLON and his staff the latter in gorgeous uniform, the former in his shabby greatcoat and plumed turned up hat walking to and fro with his hands behind him and occasionally stopping to warm himself The French infantry are drawn up in a dense array at the back of these

The whole Austrian garrison of Ulm marches out of the city gate opposite NAPOLLON GENERAL MACK is at the head, followed by GURLEY, GOTTFELD, HILM, KLENAU, LICHTENSTEIN, and many other officers, who advance to BONAPARTE and deliver their swords

MACK

Behold me, Sire Mack the unfortunate !

NAPOLÉON

War, General, ever has its ups and downs,
And you must take the better and the worse
As impish chance or destiny ordains
Come near and warm you here A glowing fire
Is life on these depressing, mired, moist days
Of smitten leaves down-dropping clammy,
And toadstools like the putrid lungs of men

(To his lieutenants)

Cause them to stand to right and left of me

The Austrian officers arrange themselves as directed and the body of the
Austrians now file past their Conqueror, lying down their arms as they
approach, some with angry gestures and words, others in moody silence

Listen, I pray you, Generals gathered here
I tell you frankly that I know not why
Your master wages this wild war with me
I know not what he seeks by such injustice,
Unless to give me practice in my trade—
That of a soldier—where to I was bred
Deemed he my craft might slip from me, unplied ?
Let him now own me still a dab therein !

MACK

Permit me, your Imperial Majesty,
To speak one word in answer, which is this,
No war was wished for by my Emperor
Russia constrained him to it !

NAPOLÉON

If that be,
You are no more a European power —
I would point out to him that my resources
Are not confined to these my musters here,
My prisoners of war, in route for France,
Will see some marks of my resources there !
Two hundred thousand volunteers, right fit,
Will join my standards at a single nod,
And in six weeks prove soldiers to the bone,

Whilst you recruits, compulsion's scavenging,
 Scarce weld to warriors after toilsome years
 But I want nothing on this Continent
 The English only are my enemies
 Ships, colonies, and commerce I desire,
 Yea, therewith to advantage you as me
 Let me then charge you Emperor, my brother,
 To turn his feet the shortest way to peace —
 All states must have an end, the weak, the strong,
 Ay, even may fall the dynasty of Lorraine !

The filing past and lying down of arms by the Austrian army continues
 with monotonous regularity as if it would never end

NAPOLÉON (in a murmur, after a while)

Well, what cares England ! She has won her game,
 I have unlearned to threaten her from Boulogne
 Her gold it is that forms the web of this
 Fair tapestry of armies marshalled here !
 Like-wise of Russia's, drawing steadily nigh
 But they may see what these see, by and by

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*So let him speak, the while we clearly sight him
 Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,
 The all-compelling crystal pane but drags
 Whither the showman wills*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*And yet, my friend,
 The Will Itself might smile at this collapse
 Of Austria's men-at-arms, so drolly done,
 Even as, in your phantasmagoric show,
 The deft manipulator of the slide
 Might smile at his own art*

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ah, no ah, no !
 It is impassible as glacial snow —
 Within the Great Unshaken
 These painted shapes awaken*

*A lesser thrill than doth the gentle lave
Of yonder bank by Danube's wandering wave
Within the Schwarzwald heights that give it flow !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But O, the intolerable antilogy
Of making figments feel !*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Logic's in that
It does not, I must own, quite play the game*

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*And thus day wins for Ulm a dingy fame,
Which centuries shall not blot from her old name !*

The procession of Austrians continues till the scene is hidden by haze

SCENE VI

LONDON SPRING GARDENS

Before LORD MALMESBURY'S house on a Sunday morning in the same
autumn. Idlers prase and gather in the background
PITT enters, and meets LORD MULGRAVE

MULGRAVE

Good day, Pitt. Ay, these leaves that skim the ground
With withered voices, hint that sunshine-time
Is well-nigh past — And so the game's begun
Between him and the Austro-Russian force
As second movement in the faceabout
From Boulogne shore, with which he has hounded us ? —
What has been heard on't ? Have they clashed as yet ?

PITT

The Emperor Francis, partly at my instance,
Has throned the chief command on General Mack,
A man most capable and far of sight
He centres by the Danube-bank at Ulm,
A town well-walled, and firm for leaning on
To intercept the French in their advance
From the Black Forest towards the Russian troops

Approaching from the east If Bonaparte
Sustain his marches at the break-neck speed
That all report, they must have met ere now
—There is a rumour quite impossible !

MULGRAVE

You still have faith in Mack as strategist ?
There have been doubts of his far-sightedness

PITT (hastily)

I know, I know—I am calling here at Malmesbury's
At somewhat an unceremonious time
To ask his help to translate this Dutch print
The post has brought Malmesbury is great at Dutch,
Learning it long at Leyden, years ago

He draws a newspaper from his pocket unfolds it, and glances it down

There's news here unintelligible to me
Upon the very matter ! You'll come in ?

They call at LORD MALMESBURY He meets them in the hall, and
welcomes them with an apprehensive look of foreknowledge

PITT

Pardon this early call The packet's in,
And wings me this unreadable Dutch paper,
So, as the offices are closed to day,
I have brought it round to you

(Handing the paper)

What does it say ?
For God's sake, read it out You know the tongue

MALMESBURY (with hesitation)

I have glanced it through already—more than once—
A copy having reached me, too, by now
We are in the presence of a great disaster !
See here It says that Mack, enjailed in Ulm
By Bonaparte—from four sides shutting round—
Capitulated, and with all his force
Laid down his arms before his conqueror !

PITT's face changes A silence

MULGRAVE

Outrageous ! Ignominy unparalleled !

PITT

By God, my lord, these statements must be false !
These foreign punts are trustless as Cheap Jack
Dumfounding yokels at a country fair
I heed no word of it — Impossible
What ! Eighty thousand Austrians, nigh in touch
With Russia's levies that Kutuzof leads,
To lay down arms before the war's begun ?
'Tis too much !

MALMESBURY

But I fear it is too true !
Note the assevered source of the report—
One beyond thought of minter's of mock tales
The witer adds that military wits
Cry that the Little Corporal now makes war
In a new way, using his soldiers' legs
And not their arms, to bring him victory
Ha ha ! The quip must sting the Corporal's foes

PITT (after a pause)

O vacillating Prussia ! Had she moved,
Had she but planted one foot firmly down,
All this had been averted — I must go
'Tis sure, 'tis sure, I labour but in vain !

MALMESBURY accompanies him to the door and PITT walks away
disquietedly towards Whitehall the other two regarding him as he goes

MULGRAVE

Too swiftly he declines to feebleness,
And these things well might shake a stouter frame !

MALMESBURY

Of late the burden of all Europe's cares,
Of hiring and maintaining half her troops,
His single pair of shoulders has upborne,
Thanks to the obstinacy of the King —
His thin, strained face, his ready irritation,
Are ominous signs He may not be for long

MULGRAVE

He alters fast, indeed,—as do events

MALMESBURY

His labour's lost, and all our money gone !
It looks as if this doughty coalition
On which we have lavished so much pay and pains
Would end in wick

MULGRAVE

All is not over yet ,
The gathering Russian forces are unbroke

MALMESBURY

Well, we shall see Should Boney vanquish these,
And silence all resistance on that side,
His move will then be backward to Boulogne,
And so upon us

MULGRAVE

Nelson to our defence !

MALMESBURY

Ay, where is Nelson ? Faith, by this late time
He may be sodden, churned in Biscay swirls,
Or blown to polar bears by boreal gales,
Or sleeping amorously in some calm cave
On the Canaries' or Atlantis' shore
Upon the bosom of his Dido dear,
For all that we know ! Never a sound of him
Since passing Portland one September day—
To make for Cadiz, so 'twas then believed

MULGRAVE

He's staunch He's watching, or I am much deceived

MULGRAVE departs MALMESBURY goes within The scene shuts

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I

OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR

A bird's-eye view of the sea discloses itself. It is daybreak, and the broad face of the ocean is fringed on its eastern edge by the Cape and the Spanish shore. On the rolling surface immediately beneath the eye, ranged more or less in two parallel lines running north and south, one group from the twin standing off somewhat, are the vessels of the combined French and Spanish navies, whose canvases, as the sun edges upward, shine in its rays like satin.

On the western horizon two columns of ships appear in full sail, small as moths to the aerial vision. They are bearing down towards the combined squadrons.

RECORDING ANGEL I (intoning from his book)

*At last Villeneuve accepts the sea and fate,
Despite the Cadiz council called of late,
Whereat his stoutest captains—men the first*

To do all mortals durst—

*Willing to sail, and bleed, and bear the worst,
Short of cold suicide, did yet opt
That plunging mid those teeth of treble line*

In jaws of oaken wood

*Held open by the English navy's
With suasive breadth and artful modesty,
Would smack of purposeless foolhardiness*

RECORDING ANGEL II

*But word came, writ in mandatory mood,
To put from Cadiz, gain Toulon, and straight
At a said sign on Italy operate
Moreover that Villeneuve, arrived as planned,
Would find Rosily in supreme command—
Gloomy Villeneuve grows rash, and, darkly brave,
Leaps to meet war, storm, Nelson—even the grave*

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ere the concussion hurtle, draw abreast
Of the sea*

SEMICHORUS II

*Where Nilson's hulls are rising from the west,
Silently*

SEMICHORUS I

*Each linen wing outspread, each man and lad
Sworn to be*

SEMICHORUS II

*Amid the vanmost, or for Death, or glad
Victory!*

The point of sight descends till it is near the deck of the "Bucentaure" the flag-ship of VILLENEUVE. Present thereon are the ADMIRAL, his FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIL, LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON, other naval officers and seamen.

MAGENDIL

All night we have read their signals in the air,
Whereby the peering frigates of their van
Have told them of our trend

VILLENEUVE

The enemy
Makes threat as though to throw him on our stern
Signal the fleet to wear, bid Gravina
To come in from manœuvring with his twelve,
And range himself in line

Officers murmur

I say again
Bid Gravina draw hither with his twelve,
And signal all to wear!—and come upon
The larboard tack with every bow anorth!—
So we make Cadiz in the worst event,
And patch our rags up there. As we head now
Our only practicable thoroughfare
Is through Gibraltar Strait—a fatal door!

Signal to close the line and leave no gaps
Remember, too, what I have already told
Remind them of it now. They must not pause
For signalings from me amid a strife
Whose chaos may prevent my clear discernment,
Or may forbid my signalling at all

The voice of honour then becomes the chief's,
 Listen they thereto, and set every stitch
 To heave them on into the fiercest fight
 Now I will sum up all heed well the charge

EACH CAPTAIN, PETTY OFFICER, AND MAN

IS ONLY AT HIS POST WHEN UNDER FIRE

The ships of the whole fleet turn their bows from south to north as directed and close up in two parallel curved columns the concave side of each column being towards the enemy and the interspaces of the first column being in general opposite the hulls of the second

AN OFFICER (straining his eyes towards the English fleet)

How they skip on! Their overcrowded sails
 Bulge like blown bladders in a tumpman's shop
 The market-morning after slaughterday!

PETTY OFFICER (aside)

It's morning before slaughterday with us,
 I make so bold to bode!

The English Admiral is seen to be signalling to his fleet. The signal is "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY." A loud cheering from all the English ships comes undulating on the wind when the signal is read.

VILLENEUVE

They are signalling too — Well, business soon begins!
 You will reserve your fire. And be it known
 That we display no admirals' flags at all
 Until the action's past 'Twill puzzle them,
 And work to our advantage when we close —
 Yes, they are double-ranked, I think, like us,
 But we shall see anon

MAGENDIE

The foremost one
 Makes for the "Santa Ana" In such case
 The "Fougueux" might assist her

VILLENEUVE

Be it so—

There's time enough — Our ships will be in place,
 And ready to speak back in iron words
 When theirs cry Hail! in the same sort of voice

They prepare to receive the northernmost column of the enemy's ships headed by the "Victory," trying the distance by an occasional single shot

During their suspense a discharge is heard southward and turning they behold COLLINGWOOD at the head of his column in the "Royal Sovereign," just engaging with the Spanish "Santa Ana." Meanwhile the "Victory" draws still nearer preserving silence with brzen sang-froid. At a concerted moment full broadsides are discharged into her simultaneously from the "Bucentaure," the "Santisima Trinidad," and the "Redoutable."

When the smoke clears the "Victory's" mizen topmast with spurs and a quantity of rigging, is seen to have fallen, her wheel to be shot away and her deck encumbered with dead and wounded men.

VILLENEUVE

'Tis well ! But see, their course is undelayed,
And still they near in clenched audacity !

DAUDIGNON

This northmost column bears upon our beam
Their prows will pierce us thwartwise That's the aim

MAGENDIE

Which nimble deft Lucas o' the "Redoutable"
Most gallantly bestirs him to outscheme —
See, how he strains, that on his timbers fall
Blows that were destined for his Admiral !

During this the French ship "Redoutable" is moving forward to interpose itself between the approaching "Victory" and the "Bucentaure."

VILLENEUVE

Now comes it ! The "Santisima Trinidad,"
The old "Redoutable's" hard sides, and ours,
Will take the touse of this bombastic blow
Your grapnels and your boarding-hatchets—ready !
We'll dash our eagle on the English deck,
And swear to fetch it !

CRAW

Aye ! We swear Huzza !
Long live the Emperor !

But the "Victory" suddenly swerves to the rear of the "Bucentaure," and crossing her stern waters discharges a broadside into her and the "Redoutable" endwise, wrapping the scene in folds of smoke.

The point of view changes

SCENE II

THE SAME THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE "VICTORY"

The Van of each division of the English fleet has drawn to the windward side of the combined fleets of the enemy, and broken their order, the 'Victory' being now parallel to and alongside the 'Redoubtable,' the 'Téméraire' taking up a station on the other side of that ship. The 'Bucentaure' and the 'Santisima Trinidad' become jammed together a little way ahead. A smoke and din of cannonading prevail, amid which the studding sail booms are shot away.

NELSON, HARDY, BLACKWOOD, SECRETARY SCOTT, LIEUTENANT PASCO, BURKE the Purser, CAPTAIN ADAIR of the *Marmes*, and other officers are on or near the quarter deck.

NELSON

See, there, that noble fellow Collingwood,
How straight he helms his ship into the fire!—
Now you'll haste back to yours (to Blackwood)

—We must henceforth

Trust to the Great Disposer of events,
And justice of our cause!

[BLACKWOOD leaves]

The battle grows hotter. A double-headed shot cuts down seven or eight marines on the 'Victory's' poop.

Captain Adair, part those marines of yours,
And hasten to disperse them round the ship—
Your place is down below, Burke, not up here,
Ah, yes, like David you would see the battle!

A heavy discharge of musket shot comes from the tops of the 'Santisima Trinidad.' ADAIR and PASCO fall. Another swathe of marines is mowed down by chain shot.

SCOTT

My lord, I use to you the utmost prayers
That I have privilege to shape in words
Remove your stars and orders, I would beg,
That shot was aimed at you

NELSON

They were awarded to me as an honour,
And shall I do despite to those who prize me,
And slight their gifts? No, I will die with them
If die I must

He walks up and down with HARDY

HARDY

At least let's put you on
Your old greatcoat, my lord—(the aim is keen)—
"Twill cover all So while you still retain
Your dignities, you baulk these deadly aims

NELSON

Thank 'ee, good friend But no,—I haven't time,
I do assure you—not a tice to spare,
As you well see

A few minutes later SCOTT falls dead a bullet having pierced his skull
Immediately after a shot passes between the Admiral and the Captain,
tearing the instep of HARDY'S shoe, and striking away the buckle. They
shake off the dust and splinters it has scattered over them. NELSON glances
round, and perceives what has happened to his secretary

NELSON

Poor Scott, too, carried off! Warm work this, Hardy,
Too warm to go on long

HARDY

I think so, too,
Then lower ports are blocked against our hull,
And our charge now is less Each knock so near
Sets their old wood on fire

NELSON

Ay, rotten as peat
What's that? I think she has struck, or pretty nigh!
A clacking of musketry

HARDY

Not yet—Those small-aim men there, in her tops,
Thin our crew fearfully Now, too, our guns
Have to be dipped full down, or they would rake
The "Toménaire" there on the other side

NELSON

True—While you deal good measure out to these
Keep slapping at those giants over here—
The "Trinidad," I mean, and the "Bucentaure,"
To win'ard—swelling up so pompously

HARDY

I'll see no slackness shall be shown that way

They part and go in their respective directions. Gunners, naked to the waist and reeking with sweat are now in swift action on the several decks and firemen carry buckets of water hither and thither. The killed and wounded thicken around and are being lifted and examined by the surgeons. NELSON and HARDY meet again.

NELSON

Bid still the firemen bring more bucketfuls,
And dash the water into each new hole
Our guns have gouged in the "Redoutable,"
Or we shall all be set ablaze together!

HARDY

Let me once more advise, entreat, my lord,
That you do not expose yourself so clearly
Those fellows in the mizzen-top up there
Are peppering round you quite perceptibly

NELSON

Now, Hardy, don't offend me. They can't aim,
They only set their own rent sails on fire —
But if they could, I would not hide a button
To save ten lives like mine. I have no cause
To prize it, I assure 'ee — Ah, look there,
One of the women hit,—and badly, too
Poor wench! Let some one shift her quickly down

HARDY

My lord, each humblest sojourner on the seas,
Dock labourer, lame longshore man, bowed bargee,
Sees it as policy to shield his life
For those dependent on him. Much more, then,
Should one upon whose priceless presence here
Such issues hang, so many strivers lean,
Use average circumspection at an hour
So critical for us all

NELSON

Ay, ay. Yes, yes,
I know your meaning, Hardy, and I know
That you disguise as frigid policy
What really is your honest love of me

But, faith, I have had my day My work's nigh done,
 I serve all interests best by chancing it
 Here with the commonest — Ah, then heavy guns
 Are silenced every one! Thank God for that

HARDY

'Tis so They only use their small arms now

He goes to labour to see what is progressing on that side between his ship and the "Santisima Trinidad"

OFFICER (to a seaman)

Swab down these stains The mess of blood about
 Makes 'em so slippery that one's like to fall
 In carving the wounded men below

While CAPTAIN HARDY is still a little way off, LORD NELSON turns to walk aft, when a ball from one of the muskets in the mizzen top of the 'Redoubtable' enters his left shoulder. He falls upon his face on the deck. HARDY looks round and sees what has happened.

HARDY (hastily)

Ah—what I feared, and strove to hide I feared!

He goes towards NELSON, who in the meantime has been lifted by SERGEANT-MAJOR SECKLE and two seamen.

NELSON

Hardy, I think they've done for me at last!

HARDY

I hope not!

NELSON

Yes My backbone is shot through
 I have not long to live

The men proceed to carry him below

Those tiller ropes

They've torn away, get instantly repaired!

At sight of him borne along wounded there is great agitation among the crew

Cover my face There will no good be done
 By drawing their attention off to me
 Bear me along, good fellows, I am but one
 Among the many darkened here to day!

He is carried on to the cockpit over the crowd of dead and wounded
 (To the Chaplain)

Doctor, I'm gone I am waste o' time to you

SCENE III

PART FIRST

HARDY (remaining behind)

Hills, go to Collingwood and let him know
That we've no Admiral here

He passes on

A LIEUTENANT

Now quick and pick him off who did the deed—
That white-bloused man there in the mizzen top

POLLARD, a midshipman (shooting)

No sooner said than done A pretty aim !

The Frenchman falls dead upon the poop

The spectacle seems now to become enveloped in smoke, and the point of
view changes

SCENE III

THE SAME ON BOARD THE "BUCENTAURE"

The bowsprit of the French Admiral's ship is stuck fast in the stern
gallery of the 'Santissima Trinidad' the starboard side of the "Bucenaire"
being shattered by shots from two English three-deckers which are pounding
her on that hand. The poop is also reduced to ruin by two other English
ships that are attacking her from behind.

On the quarter deck are ADMIRAL VILLENEUVE, the FLAG CAPTAIN
MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANTS DAUDIGNON, FOURNIER and others anxiously
occupied. The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling
among the dead and dying who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.

VILLENEUVE

We shall be crushed if matters go on thus —
Direct the "Trinidad" to let her drive,
That this foul tangle may be loosened clear !

DAUDIGNON

It has been tried, sir, but she cannot move

VILLENEUVE

Then signal to the "Hero" that she strive
Once more to drop this way

MAGENDIE

We may make signs,
But in the thickened air what signal's marked ?—
'Tis done however

VILLENEUVE

The "Redoutable"

And "Victory" there,—they grip in dying throes !
 Something's amiss on board the English ship
 Surely the Admiral's fallen ?

A PLIFY OFFICER

Sir, they say

That he was shot some hour, or half, ago —
 With dandyism raised to godlike pitch
 He stalked the deck in all his jewellery,
 And so was hit

MAGENDIE

Then Fortune shows her face !

We have scotched England in dispatching him

(He watches)

Yes ! He commands no more, and Lucas, joying,
 Has taken steps to board Look, spars are laid,
 And his best men are mounting at his heels

A crash is heard

VILLENEUVE

Ah, God—he is too late ! Whence came that hail
 Of heavy grape ? The smoke prevents my seeing
 But at brief whiles —The boarding band has fallen,
 Fallen almost to a man —Twas well assayed !

MAGENDIE

That's from their "Teméraire," whose vicious broadside
 Has cleared poor Lucas' decks

VILLENEUVE

And Lucas, too

I see him no more there His red plinks show
 Three hundred dead if one Now for ourselves !

Four of the English three-deckers have gradually closed round the
 "Bucentaure" whose bowsprit still sticks fast in the gallery of the "Santisima
 Trinidad" A broadside comes from one of the English, resulting in worse
 havoc on the "Bucentaure" The main and mizzen masts of the latter fall,
 and the boats are beaten to pieces A raking fire of musketry follows from
 the attacking ships, to which the "Bucentaure" heroically continues still to
 keep up a reply

CAPTAIN MAGENDIE falls wounded His place is taken by LIEUTENANT
 DAUDIGNON

VILLENEUVE

Now that the fume has lessened, code my biddance
 Upon our only mast, and tell the van
 At once to wear, and come into the fire
 (Aside) If it be true that, as *he* sneezes, success
 Demands of me but cool audacity,
 To-day shall leave him nothing to desire !

Musketry continues DAUDIGNON falls He is removed his post being
 taken by LIEUTENANT FOURNIER Another crash comes, and the deck is
 suddenly encumbered with rigging

FOURNIER

There goes our foremast ! How for signalling now ?

VILLENEUVE

To try that longer, Fournier, is in vain
 Upon this haggard, scorched, and ravaged hulk,
 Her decks all reeking with such gory shows,
 Her starboard side in rents, her stern nigh gone !
 How does she keep afloat ?—
 “Bucentaure,” O unlucky good old ship !
 My part in you is played Ay—I must go,
 I must tempt Fate elsewhere,—if but a boat
 Can bear me through this wreckage to the van

FOURNIER

Our boats are stove in, or as full of holes
 As the cook’s skimmer, from their cursed balls !

Musketry VILLENEUVE’S Head-of-Stuff DE PIGNA, falls wounded
 and many additional men VILLENEUVE glances troublously from ship to
 ship of his fleet

VILLENEUVE

How hideous are the waves, so pure this dawn !—
 Red-frothed, and friends and foes all mixed therein —
 Can we in some way hail the “Trinidad”
 And get a boat from her ?

They attempt to attract the attention of the “Santísima Trinidad” by
 shouting

Impossible,
 Amid the loud combustion of this strife
 As well try holloing to the antipodes !

So here I am The bliss of Nelson's end
Will not be mine, his full refulgent eve
Becomes my midnight! Well the fleets shall see
That I can yield my cause with dignity

The "Bucentaure" strikes her flag

A boat then puts off from the English ship "Conqueror," and VILIRNEUVE, having surrendered his sword is taken out from the "Bucenaure." But being unable to regain her own ship the boat is picked up by the "Mars," and the French Admiral is received aboard her.

The point of view changes

SCENE IV

THE SAME THE COCKPIT OF THE "VICTORY"

A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied by a continuous ground brass roar from the guns of the warring fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds.

NELSON, his face now pinched and worn with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman's berth dimly lit by a lantern. DR. BEATTY, DR. MAGRATH, the Rev. DR. SCOTT, the Chaplain, BURKE the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.

MAGRATH (in a low voice)

Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone

BEATTY

There was no hope for them

NELSON (brokenly)

Who have just died?

BEATTY

Two who were badly hit by now, my lord,
Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple

NELSON

Ah!—

So many lives—in such a glorious cause
I join them soon, soon, soon!—O where is Hardy?

Will nobody bring Hardy to me—none ?
He must be killed, too Surely Hardy's dead ?

A MIDSHIPMAN

He's coming soon, my lord The constant call
On his full heed of this most mortal fight
Keeps him from hastening hither as he would

NELSON

I'll wait, I'll wait I should have thought of it
Presently HARDY comes down NELSON and he grasps hands
Hardy, how goes the day with us and England ?

HARDY

Well, very well, thank God for't, my dear lord
Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment struck,
And put himself aboard the "Conqueroi"
Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about,
Thus far we've got The said "Bucentaure" chief
The "Santa Ana," the "Redoutable,"
The "Fougueux," the "Santisima Trinidad,"
"San Augustino," "San Francisco," "Aigle",
And our old "Swiftsure," too, we've grappled back,
To every seaman's joy But now their van
Has tacked to bear round on the "Victory"
And crush her by sheer weight of wood and brass
Three of our best I am therefore calling up,
And make no doubt of wisting theirs, and France

NELSON

That's well I swore for twenty—But it's well

HARDY

We'll have 'em yet ! But without you, my lord,
We have to make slow plodding do the deeds
That sprung by inspiration ere you fell,
And on this ship the more particularly

NELSON

No, Hardy—Ere 'twas your settled fault
So modestly to whittle down your worth

But I saw stuff in you which admuuls need
 When, taking thought, I chose the "Victory's" keel
 To do my business with these braggarts in
 A business finished now, for me!—Good friend,
 Slow shades are creeping on me I scarce see you

HARDY

The smoke from ships upon our win'ard side,
 And the dust raised by their worm-eaten hulks,
 When our balls touch 'em, blind the eyes, in truth

NEISON

No, it is not that dust, 'tis dust of death
 That daikens me

A shock overhead HARDY goes up One or two other officers go up,
 and by and by return

What was that extra noise?

OFFICER

The "Formidable" passed us by, my lord,
 And thumped a stunning broadside into us—
 But, on their side, the "Hero's" captain's fallen
 The "Algecinas" has been boarded, too,
 By Captain Tyler, and the captain shot
 Admiral Gravina desperately holds out,
 They say he's lost an arm

NELSON

And we ourselves—
 Who have we lost on board here? Nay, but tell me!

BEATTY

Besides poor Scott, my lord, and Charles Adair,
 Lieutenant Ram, and Whipple, captain's clerk,
 There's Smith, and Palmer, midshipmen, just killed,
 And fifty odd of seamen and marines

NELSON

Poor youngsters! Scarred old Nelson joins you soon

BEATTY

And wounded Bligh, lieutenant, Pasco, too,
 And Reeves, and Peake, lieutenants of marines,
 And Rivers, Westphall, Bulkeley, midshipmen,
 With, of the crew, a hundred odd just now,
 Unreckoning those late fallen not brought below

BURKE

That fellow in the mizzen-top, my lord,
 Who made it his affair to wing you thus,
 We took good care to settle, and he fell
 Like an old look, smack from his perch, stone dead

NELSON

'Twas not worth while!—He was, no doubt, a man
 Who in simplicity and sheer good faith
 Strove but to serve his country Rest be to him!
 And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,
 If such he had, be tided through their loss,
 And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me

HARDY re-enters

Who's that? Ah—here you come! How, Hardy, now?

HARDY

The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be wounded,
 We know not with what truth But, be as 'twill,
 He sheers away with all he could call round,
 And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port

A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises on deck A mid-
 shipman goes above and returns

MIDSHIPMAN (in the background)

It is the enemy's first-rate, the "Achille,"
 Blown to a thousand atoms!—While on fire,
 Before she burst, the captain's woman there,
 Desperate for life, climbed from the gunroom port
 Upon the rudder-chains, stipped herself stark,
 And swam for the Pickle's boat Our men in charge,
 Seeing her great breasts bulging on the brine,
 Sang out, "A mermaid 'tis, by God!"—then roved
 And hauled her in—

BURKE

Such unbid sights obtude
On death's dyed stage !

MIDSHIPMAN

Meantime the "Achille" fought on,
Even while the ship was blazing, knowing well
The fire must reach their powder, which it did
The spot is covered now with floating men,
Some whole, the main in parts, arms, legs, trunks, heads,
Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,
And splinters looped with entrails of the crew

NELSON (arousing)

Our course will be to anchor Let them know

HARDY

But let me ask, my lord, as needs I must,
Seeing your state, and that our work's not done,
Shall I, from you, bid Admiral Collingwood
Take full on him the conduct of affairs ?

NELSON (trying to raise himself)

Not while I live, I hope ! No, Hardy, no
Give Collingwood my order Anchor all !

HARDY (hesitating)

You mean the signal's to be made forthwith ?

NELSON

I do !—By God, if but our carpenter
Could rig me up a jury-backbone now,
To last one hour—until the battle's done,
I'd see to it ! But here I am—stove in—
Broken—all logged and done for ! Done, ay done !

BEATTY (retuning from the other wounded)

My lord, I must implore you to lie calm !
You shorten what at best may not be long

NELSON (exhausted)

I know, I know, good Beatty ! Thank you well
Hardy, I was impatient Now I am still
Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare ?

BEATTY and the others retire, and the two abide in silence except for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths NELSON is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze

NELSON (suddenly)

What are you thinking, that you speak no word ?

HARDY (waking from a short reverie)

Thoughts all confused, my lord —their needs on deck,
Your own sad state, and your univalled past,
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—
Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill
Where I was born The tumbling stream, the garden,
The placid look of the grey dial there,
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,
And the red apples on my father's trees,
Just now full ripe,

NELSON

Ay, thus do little things
Steal into my mind, too But ah, my heart
Knows not your calm philosophy !—There's one—
Come nearer to me, Hardy —One of all,
As you well guess, pervades my memoir now,
She, and my daughter—I speak freely to you
'Twas good I made that codicil this morning
That you and Blackwood witnessed Now she rests
Safe on the nation's honour Let her have
My hair, and the small treasured things I owned,
And take care of her, as you care for me !

HARDY promises

NELSON (resuming in a murmur)

Does love die with our flame's decease, I wonder,
Or does it live on ever ?

A silence BEATTY reapproaches

HARDY

Now I'll leave,
See if your order's gone, and then return

NELSON (symptoms of death beginning to change his face)

Yes, Hardy, yes, I know it You must go —
Here we shall meet no more, since Heaven forbids
That care for me should keep you idle now,
When all the ship demands you Beatty, too
Go to the others who lie bleeding there,
Them you can aid Me you can render none
My time here is the briefest — If I live
But long enough I'll anchor But—too late—
My anchoring's elsewhere ordered! Kiss me, Hardy

HARDY bends over him

I'm satisfied Thank God, I have done my duty!

HARDY blushes his eyes with his hand and withdraws to go above,
pausing to look back before he finally disappears

BEATTY (watching Nelson)

Ah!—Hush around!
He's sinking It is but a trifle now
Of minutes with him Stand you, please, aside,
And give him air

BEATTY, the Chaplain MAGRATH, the Steward, and attendants continue
to regard NELSON BEATTY looks at his watch

BEATTY

Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell,
And now he's going

They wait NELSON dies

CHAPLAIN

Yes He has homed to where
There's no more sea

BEATTY

We'll let the Captain know,
Who will confer with Collingwood at once
I must now turn to these

He goes to another part of the cockpit, a midshipman ascends to the deck,
and the scene overclouds

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*His thread was cut too slowly ! When he fell,
And bade his fame farewell,
He might have passed, and skinned his long-drawn pain,
Endured in vain, in vain !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Young Spirits, be not critical of That
Which was before, and shall be after you !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But out of tune the Mode and meritless
That quickens sense in shapes whom, thou hast said,
Necessitation sways ! A life there was
Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles—
Who visioned it too clearly, even the while
He dubbed the Will "the gods" Truly said he,
"Such gross injustice to their own creation
Burdens the time with mournfulness for us,
And for themselves with shame"¹—Things mechanized
By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes
Would, in a thorough-sphered melodious rule,
And governance of sweet consistency,
Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide
With That Which holds responsibility,
Or meet*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Yea, yea, yea !
Thus would the Mover pay
The score each puppet owes,
The Reaper reap what his contrivance sows !
Why make Life debtor when it did not buy ?
Why wound so keenly Right that it would die ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, blame not ! For what judgment can ye blame ?—
In that immense unweeting Mind is shown
One far above forethinking, processive,
Rapt, superconscious, a Clairvoyant
That knows not what It knows, yet works therewith —*

¹ Soph. *Trach.* 1266-72

*The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel,
If I report it meetly, came unmeant,
Emerging with blind gropes from impercipient
By listless sequence—luckless, tragic Chance,
In your more human tongue*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*And hence unneeded
In the economy of Vitality,
Which might have ever kept a sealed cognition
As doth the Will Itself*

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Nay, nay, nay,
Your hasty judgments stay,
Until the topmost cyme
Have crowned the last entablature of Time
O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will,
O pause, till all things all their days fulfil !*

SCENE V

LONDON THE GUILDHALL

A crowd of citizens has gathered outside to watch the carriages as they drive up and deposit guests invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet for which event the Hall is brilliantly lit within. A cheer rises when the equipage of any popular personage arrives at the door.

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, well ! Nelson is the man who ought to have been banqueted to-night. But he is coming to Town in a coach different from these !

SECOND CITIZEN

Will they bring his poor splintered body home ?

FIRST CITIZEN

Yes. They say he's to be tombed in marble, at St Paul's or Westminster. We shall see him if he lays in state. It will make a patriotic spectacle for a fine day.

BOY

How can you see a dead man, father, after so long ?

FIRST CITIZEN

They'll embalm him, my boy, as they did all the great Egyptian admirals

BOY

His lady will be handy for that, won't she ?

FIRST CITIZEN

Don't ye ask awkward questions

SECOND CITIZEN

Here's another coming !

FIRST CITIZEN

That's my Lord Chancellor Eldon Wot he'll say, and wot he'll look !—Mr Pitt will be here soon

BOY

I don't like Billy He killed Uncle John's parrot

SECOND CITIZEN

How may ye make that out, youngster ?

BOY

Mr Pitt made the war, and the war made us want sailors, and Uncle John went for a walk down Wapping High Street to talk to the pretty ladies one evening, and there was a press all along the river that night—a regular hot one—and Uncle John was carried on board a man-of-war to fight under Nelson, and nobody minded Uncle John's parrot, and it talked itself to death So Mr Pitt killed Uncle John's parrot, see it, sir ?

SECOND CITIZEN

You had better have a care of this boy, friend His brain is too precious for the common risks of Cheapside Not but what he might as well have said Boney killed the parrot when he was about it And as for Nelson—who's now sailing shinier seas than ours, if they've rubbed Her off his slate where he's gone to,

—the French papers say that our loss in him is greater than our gain in ships, so that logically the victory is theirs. Gad, sir, it's almost true!

A hurrying is heard from Cheapside and the crowd in that direction begins to hustle and show excitement

FIRST CITIZEN

He's coming, he's coming! Here, let me lift you up, my boy—Why, they have taken out the horses, as I am man alive!

SECOND CITIZEN

Pitt for ever!—Why, here's a blade opening and shutting his mouth like the rest, but never a sound does he raise!

THIRD CITIZEN

I've not too much breath to carry me through my day's work, so I can't afford to waste it in such luxuries as crying Huzzah to aristocrats. If ye was ten yards off y'd think I was shouting as loud as any.

SECOND CITIZEN

It's a very mean practice of ye to husband yourself at such a time, and gape in dumbshow like a frog in Plaistow Marshes.

THIRD CITIZEN

No, sir, it's economy, a very necessary instinct in these days of ghastly taxations to pay half the armies in Europe! In short, in the words of the Ancients, it is scarcely compass-mentas to do otherwise! Somebody must save something, or the country will be as bankrupt as Mr Pitt himself is, by all account, though he don't look it just now.

PITT'S coach passes drawn by a troop of running men and boys. The Prime Minister is seen within, a thin erect up-nosed figure, with a flush of excitement on his usually pale face. The vehicle reaches the doorway to the Guildhall and halts with a jolt. PITT gets out shakily, and amid cheers enters the building.

FOURTH CITIZEN

Quite a triumphal entry! Such is power,
Now worshipped, now accursed! The overthrow
Of all Pitt's European policy
When his hired army and his chosen general
Surrendered them at Ulm a month ago,
Is now forgotten! Ay, this Trafalgar

Will botch up many a ragged old repute,
 Make Nelson figure as domestic saint
 No less than country's saviour, Pitt exalt
 As zenith-star of England's firmament,
 And uncuse all the bogglers of her weal
 At this adventurous time

THIRD CITIZEN

Talk of Pitt being ill He looks hearty as a buck

FIRST CITIZEN

It's the news—no more His spirits are up like a rocket for
 the moment

BOY

Is it because Trafalgar is near Portingal that he loves Port
 wine?

SECOND CITIZEN

Ah, as I said, friend, this boy must go home and be care-
 fully put to bed!

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, whatever William's faults, it is a triumph for his virtues
 to-night!

PITT having disappeared the Guildhall doors are closed and the crowd
 slowly disperses, till in the course of an hour the street shows itself empty
 and dark, only a few oil lamps burning

The SCENE OPENS revealing the interior of the Guildhall, and the
 brilliant assembly of City magnates, Lords and Ministers seated there, Mr
 PITT occupying a chair of honour by the Lord Mayor. His health has been
 proposed as that of the Saviour of England and drunk with acclamations

PITT (standing up after repeated calls)

My lords and gentlemen —You have toasted me
 As one who has saved England and her cause
 I thank you, gentlemen, unfeignedly
 But—no man has saved England, let me say
 England has saved herself, by her exertions
 She will, I trust, save Europe by her example!

Loud applause, during which he sits down rises, and sits down again
 The scene then shuts, and the night without has place

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Those words of this man Pitt—his last large words
As I may prophesy—that ring to-night
In their first mintage to the feasters here,
Will spread with ageing, lodge, and crystallize,
And stand embedded in the English tongue
Till it grow thin, outworn, and cease to be —
So is't ordained by That Which all ordains,
For words were never winged with apter grace,
Or blent with happier choice of time and place,
To hold the imagination of this strenuous race*

SCENE VI¹

AN INN AT RENNES

Night A sleeping-chamber Two candles are burning near a bed in an alcove and writing materials are on the table

The French admiral VILLENEUVE, partly undressed, is pacing up and down the room

VILLENEUVE

These hauntings have at last nigh proved to me
That this thing must be done Illustrious foe
And teacher, Nelson blest and over blest
In thy outgoing at the noon of strife
When glory clasped thee round, while wayward Death
Refused my coaxings for the like-timed call
Yet I did press where thickest missiles fell,
And both by precept and example showed
Where lay the line of duty, patriotism,
And honour, in that combat of despair

He sees himself in the glass as he passes

Unfortunate Villeneuve!—whom fate has marked
To suffer for too firm a faithfulness —
An Emperor's chide is a command to die —
By him accursed, forsaken by my friend,
Awhile stern England's prisoner, then unloosed
Like some poor dolt unworth captivity,
Time serves me now for ceasing Why not cease?
When, as Shades whisper in the chasmal night,

¹ This scene is a little antedated, to include it in the Act to which it essentially belongs

"Better, far better, no percipience here '—
 O happy lack, that I should have no child
 To come into my hideous heritage,
 And groan beneath the burden of my name! 1

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll speak His mood is ripe for such a parle

(Sending a voice into VILLENEUVE'S ear)

Thou dost divine the hour!

VILLENEUVE

But those stern Nays,
 That heretofore were audible to me
 At each unhappy time I strove to pass?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Have been annulled The Will grants exit freely,
 Yea, It says "Now" Therefore make now thy time*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*May his sad sunken soul merge into nought
 Meekly and gently as a breeze at eve!*

VILLENEUVE

From skies above me and the air around
 Those callings which so long have circled me
 At last do whisper "Now" Now it shall be!

He seals a letter, and addresses it to his wife, then takes a dagger from his accoutrements that are hanging alongside and, lying down upon his back on the bed, stabs himself determinedly in many places, leaving the weapon in the last wound

Ungrateful master, generous foes, Farewell!

VILLENEUVE dies, and the scene darkens

1 "Quel bonheur que je n'aie aucun enfant pour recueillir mon horrible héritage et qui soit chargé du poids de mon nom!" —(Extract from the poignant letter to his wife written on this night —See Lanfrey iii 374)

SCENE VII

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX

The interior of the Old Rooms Inn Boatmen and burghers are sitting on settles round the fire, smoking and drinking

FIRST BURGHER

So they've brought him home at last, hey? And he's to be solemnized with a roaring funeral?

FIRST BOATMAN

Yes, thank God 'Tis better to lie dry than wet, if canst do it without stinking on the road gravewards And they took care that he shouldn't

SECOND BOATMAN

'Tis to be at Paul's, so they say that know And the crew of the "Victory" have to walk in front, and Captain Hardy is to carry his stais and gaiters on a great velvet pincushion

FIRST BURGHER

Where's the Captain now?

SECOND BOATMAN (nodding in the direction of
Captain Hardy's house)

Down at home here biding with his own folk a bit I zid en walking with them on the Esplanade yesterday He looks ten years older than he did when he went Ay—he brought the galliant hero home!

SECOND BURGHER

Now how did they bring him home so that he could lie in state afterwards to the naked eye!

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, as they always do,—in a cask of sperrits

SECOND BURGHER

Really, now!

FIRST BOATMAN (lowering his voice)

But what happened was this They were a long time coming, owing to contrai winds, and the "Victory" being little more

than a wieck And giong lan short, because they'd used near
all they had to peckle his body in So—they bioached the
Adm'l!

SECOND BURGHER

How?

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, the plain calendar of it is, that when he came to be
unhooped, it was found that the crew had drunk him dry
What was the men to do? Broke down by the battle, and
hardly able to keep afloat, 'twas a most defendable thing, and it
faunly saved their lives So he was their salvation after death as
he had been in the fight If he could have knowed it, 'twould
have pleased him down to the ground! How 'a would have laughed
through the spigot-hole "Draw on, my hearties! Better I
shuivel than you famish" Ha-ha!

SECOND BURGHER

It may be defendable afloat, but it seems queer ashore

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, that's as I had it from one that knows—Bob Loveday
of Overcombe—one of the "Victory" men that's going to walk
in the funeral However, let's touch a livelier string Peter
Green, strike up that new ballet that they've lately had prented
here, and were hawking about town last market-day

SECOND BOATMAN

With all my heart Though my wyndpipe's a bit clogged
since the wars have made bee! so mortal small!

SONG

THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR

I

In the wild October night time, when the wind raved round the
land,
And the Back-sea¹ met the Front-sea, and our doors were
blocked with sand,

¹ In those days the hind part of the harbour adjoining this scene was so named and at high tides the waves washed across the isthmus at a point called "The Narrows"

And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where bones of
thousands are,

We knew not what the day had done for us at Tiafalgár

(All) Had done,

Had done,

For us at Tiafalgár !

II

"Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go!" one says,
says he

We pulled, and bedtime brought the storm, but snug at home
slept we

Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through the day,
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of Cadiz Bay

The dark,

The dark,

Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay !

III

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and
tore,

As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly shore,
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and far,
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Tiafalgár !

The deep

The deep,

That night at Tiafalgár !

The Cloud curtain draws

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

Meanwhile the month moves on to counter deeds

Vast as the vainest needs,

And fiercely the predestined plot proceeds

ACT SIXTH

SCENE I

THE FIELD OF AUSTERLITZ THE FRENCH POSITION

The night is the 1st of December following and the eve of the battle. The view is from the elevated position of the Emperor's bivouac. The air cuts keen and the sky glistens with stars, but the lower levels are covered with a white fog stretching like a sea from which the heights protrude as dusky rocks.

To the left are discernible high and wooded hills. In the front mid-distance the plateau of Pratzen outstands, declining suddenly on the right to a low flat country covered with marshes and pools now mostly obscured. On the plateau itself are seen innumerable and varying lights, marking the bivouac of the centre divisions of the Austro-Russian army. Close to the foreground the fires of the French are burning surrounded by soldiers. The invisible presence of the countless thousands of massed humanity that compose the two armies makes itself felt indefinitely.

The tent of NAPOLEON rises nearest at hand, with sentinel and other military figures looming round, and saddled horses held by attendants. The accents of the Emperor are audible, through the canvas from inside, dictating a proclamation.

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

"Soldiers, the hordes of Muscovy now face you,
To mend the Austrian overthrow at Ulm!
But how so? Are not these the self-same bands
You met and swept aside at Hollabrunn,
And whose retreating forms, dismayed to flight,
Your feet pursued along the trackways here?"

"Our own position, massed and menacing,
Is rich in chance for opportune attack,
For, say they march to cross and turn our right—
A course almost their need—their stretching flank
Will offer us, from points now prearranged."

VOICE OF A MARSHAL

Shows it, your Majesty, the weakness
That marks your usual far-eyed policy,
To openly announce your tactics thus
Some twelve hours ere their form can actualize?

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

The zest such knowledge will impart to all
Is worth the risk of leakages (To Secretary)
Write on

(Dictation resumed)

"Soldiers, your sections I myself shall lead,
But ease your minds who would expostulate
Against my undue rashness If your zeal
Sow hot confusion in the hostile files
As your old manner is, and in our rush
We mingle with our foes, I'll use fit care
Nevertheless, should issues stand at pause
But for a wink-while, that time you will eye
Your Emperor the foremost in the shock,
Taking his risk with every ranksman here
For victory, men, must be no thing surmised,
As that which may or may not beam on us,
Like noontide sunshine on a dubious moor,
It must be sure!—The honour and the fame
Of France's gay and gallant infantry—
So dear, so cherished all the Empire through—
Binds us to compass it!

Maintain the ranks,
Let none be thinned by impulse or excuse
Of bearing back the wounded and, in fine,
Be every one in this conviction firm —
That 'tis our sacred bond to overthrow
These hirelings of a country not their own
Yea, England's hirelings, they!—a realm stiff steeled
In deathless hatred of our land and lives

"The campaign closes with this victory,
And we return to find our standards joined
By vast young armies forming now in France
Forthwith resistless, Peace establish we,
Worthy of you, the nation, and of me!

' NAPOLÉON.'

(To his Marshals)

So shall we prostrate these paid slaves of hers—
England's, I mean—the root of all the war

VOICE OF MURAT

The further details sent of Trafalgar
Are not assuring

VOICE OF LANNES

What may the details be?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON (moodily)

We learn that six and-twenty ships of war,
During the fight and after, struck their flags,
And that the tigerish gale throughout the night
Gave fearful finish to the English rage
By luck then Nelson's gone, but gone withal
Are twenty thousand prisoners, taken off
To gnaw their finger-nails in British hulks
Of our vast squadrons of the summer-time
But rags and splintered remnants now remain —
Thuswise Villeneuve, poor craven, quitted him!
Thus are my projects for the navy damned,
And England puffed to yet more bombast
—Well, well, I can't be everywhere No matter,
A victory's brewing here as counterpoise!
These water-rats may paddle in their salt slush,
And welcome 'Tis not long they'll have the lead
Ships can be wrecked by land!

ANOTHER VOICE

And how by land,
Your Majesty, if one may query such?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON (sardonically)

I'll bid all states of Europe shut their ports
To England's arrogant bottoms, slowly starve
Her bloated revenues and monstrous trade,
Till all her hulls lie sodden in their docks,
And her grey island eyes in vain shall seek
One jack of hers upon the ocean plains!

VOICE OF SOULT

A few more master-strokes, your Majesty,
Must be dealt hereabout to compass such!

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

God, yes !—Even here Pitt's guineas are the foes
 'Tis all a duel 'twixt this Pitt and me,
 And, more than Russia's host, and Austria's flower,
 I every where to night around me feel
 As from an unseen monster haunting nigh
 His country's hostile breath !—But come to choke us
 By our to-morrow's feats, which now, in brief,
 I recapitulate —First Soul will move
 To forward the grand project of the day
 Namely ascend in échelon, right to front,
 With Vandamme's men, and those of Saint Hilaire.
 Legrand's division somewhere further back—
 Nearly whereat I place my finger here—
 To be there reinforced by the uilleurs
 Lannes to the left here, on the Olmutz road,
 Supported by Murat's whole cavalry
 While in reserve, here, are the gienadiers
 Of Oudinot, the corps of Bernadotte,
 Rivaud, Diouet, and the Imperial Guard

MARSHALS' VOICES

Even as we understood, Sire, and have ordered.
 Nought lags but day, to light our victory !

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

Now let us up and ride the bivouacs round,
 And note positions ere the soldiers sleep
 —Omit not from to-morrow's home dispatch
 Direction that this blow of Trafalgar
 Be hushed in all the news-sheets sold in France,
 Or, if reported, let it be portrayed
 As a rash fight whereout we came not worst,
 But were so broken by the boisterous eve
 That England claims to be the conqueror

There emerge from the tent NAPOLÉON and the Marshals, who all mount the horses that are led up, and proceed through the frost and rime towards the bivouacs At the Emperor's approach to the nearest soldiery they spring up

SOLDIERS

The Emperor ! He's here ! The Emperor's here !

AN OLD GRENADIER (approaching Napoléon familiarly)

We'll bring thee Russian guns and flags galore

To celebrate thy coronation-day !

They gather into wisps the straw hay, and other litter on which they have been lying, and kindling these at the dying fires wave them as torches. This is repeated as each fire is reached till the whole French position is one wide illumination. The most enthusiastic of the soldiers follow the Emperor in a throng as he progresses and his whereabouts in the vast field is denoted by their cries.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

Strange suave pull of personality !

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

His projects they unknow, his grin unsee !

CHORUS OF THE PITIES

Their loyal luckless hearts say blindly—He !

The night-shades close over

SCENE II

THE SAME THE RUSSIAN POSITION

Midnight at the quarters of FIELD MARSHAL PRINCE KUTÚZOF at Krsnowitz. An inner apartment is discovered roughly adapted as a council-room. On a table with candles is unfolded a large map of Austerlitz and its environs.

The Generals are assembled in consultation round the table, WEIROTHER pointing to the map. LANGRON, BUKHOVEN, and MIORÁDOVICH standing by, DOKHÓROF bending over the map. PRSCHEBIS/ΓWSKY¹ indifferently walking up and down. KUTÚZOF old and weary with a scarred face and only one eye is seated in a chair at the head of the table nodding, waking and nodding again. Some officers of lower grade are in the background, and horses in waiting are heard hoofing and champing outside.

WEIROTHER speaks referring to memoirs and, snuffing the nearest candle and moving it from place to place on the map as he proceeds importantly.

WEIROTHER

Now here, our night, along the Olmutz Road

Will march and oust our counterfacers there,

Dislodge them from the Sainton Hill, and thence

Advance direct to Brunn—You heed me, sirs ?—

¹ This General's name should, it is said, be pronounced in three syllables, nearly
PRESH EV SKY

The cavalry will occupy the plain
 Our centie and main strength,—you follow me?—
 Count Langeron, Dokhtórof, with Pischebyszewsky
 And Kollowiath—now on the Prätzen heights—
 Will down and cross the Goldbach rivulet,
 Seize Tilmitz, Kobelnitz, and hamlets nigh,
 Turn the French right, move onward in their rear,
 Cross Schwaisa, hold the great Vienna road —
 So, with the nightfall, centie, right, and left,
 Will rendezvous beneath the walls of Brunn

LANGERON (taking a pinch of snuff)

Good, General, very good!—if Bonaparte
 Will kindly stand and let you have your way
 But what if he do not!—if he forestall
 These sound slow movements, mount the Prätzen hills
 When we descend, fall on *our* rear forthwith,
 While we go crying for *his* rear in vain?

KUTÚZOF (waking up)

Ay, ay, Weirotter, that's the question—eh?

WEIROTHER (impatiently)

If Bonaparte had meant to climb up there,
 Being one so spry and so determinate,
 He would have set about it ere this eve!
 He has not troops to do so, *sirs*, I say
 His utmost strength is forty thousand men

LANGERON

Then if so weak, how can so wise a brain
 Court ruin by abiding calmly here
 The impact of a force so large as ours?
 He may be mounting up this very hour!
 What think you, General Milorádovich?

MILORADOVICH

I? What's the use of thinking, when to-morrow
 Will tell us, with no need to think at all!

WEIROTHER

Pah ! At this moment he retires apace
 His fires are dark, all sounds have ceased that way
 Save voice of owl or mongrel wintering there
 But, were he nigh, these movements I detail
 Would knock the bottom from his enterprise

KUTÚZOF (ising)

Well, well Now this being ordered, set it going
 One here shall make fair copies of the notes,
 And send them round Colonel von Toll I ask
 To translate part—Generals, it grows full late,
 And half-a-dozen hours of needed sleep
 Will aid us more than maps We now disperse,
 And luck attend us all Good-night Good night

The Generals and other officers go out severally

Such plans are—paper ! Only to-morrow's light
 Reveals the true manœuvre to my sight !

He flaps out with his hand all the candles but one or two, slowly walks
 outside the house and listens On the high ground in the direction of the
 French lines are heard shouts and a wide illumination grows and strengthens,
 but the hollows are still mantled in fog

Are these the signs of regiments out of heart,
 And beating backward from an enemy !

[He remains pondering
 On the Prutzen heights immediately in front there begins a movement
 among the Russians signifying that the plan which involves desertion of that
 vantage ground is about to be put in force Noises of drunken singing arise
 from the Russian lines at various points elsewhere

KUTÚZOF re-enters his quarters with a face of misgiving
 The night shades involve the whole !

SCENE III

THE SAME THE FRENCH POSITION

Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 2nd of December A white
 frost and fog still prevail in the low-lying areas but overhead the sky is
 clear A dead silence reigns

NAPOLION, on a grey horse closely attended by BERTHIER and
 surrounded by MARSHALS SOULT LANNES, MURAT and their aides-de-

¹ In depicting this scene, the writer, like others, has followed without question the
 MS of Count Langeron quoted by M Thiers But the singular soundness of the
 Count's own opinion in the consultation, as recorded, suggests that it may have been
 somewhat strengthened on paper at the expense of that of his companions

camp, all cloaked is discernible in the gloom riding down from the high ground before Bellowitz on which they have bivouacked, to the village of Puntowitz on the Goldbach stream quite near the front of the Russian position of the day before on the Pratzen crest. The Emperor and his companions come to a pause, look around and upward to the hills, and listen

NAPOLÉON

Their bivouac fires, that lit the top last night,
Are all extinct

LANNES

And hark you, Sire, I catch
A sound which, if I err not, means the thing
We have hoped, and hoping, feared fate would not yield !

NAPOLÉON

My God, it surely is the tramp of horse
And jolt of cannon downward from the hill
Towards our right here, by the swampy lakes
That face Davout ? Thus, as I sketched, they work !

MURAT

Yes ! They already move upon Tilmitz

NAPOLÉON

Leave them alone ! Nor stick nor stone we'll stir
To interrupt them Nought that we can scheme
Will help us like their own stark sightlessness !—
Let them get down to those white lowlands there,
And so far plunge in the level that no skill,
When sudden vision flashes on their fault,
Can help them, though despair-stung, to regain
The key to mastery held at yestereve !

Meantime move onward these divisions here
Under the fog's kind shroud, descend the slope,
And cross the stream below the Russian lines
There halt concealed, till I waft down the word

NAPOLÉON and his staff retire to the hill south-east of Bellowitz as the day dawns pallidly

'Tis good to get above that immy cloak
And into cleaner air It chilled me through,

When they reach the summit they are over the fog and suddenly the sun breaks forth radiantly to the left of the Pratzen upland, illuminating the

ash hued face of NAPOLÉON and the faces of those around him All eyes are turned first to the sun, and thence to look for the dense masses of men that had occupied the upland the night before

MURAT

I see them not The plateau seems deserted !

NAPOLÉON (exultantly)

Gone, verily !—Ah, how much will you bid,
An hour hence, for the coign abandoned now !
The battle's ours —It was, then, their rash march
Downwards to Tilmitz and the Goldbach swamps
Before dawn, that we heard —No hurry, Lannes !
Enjoy this sun, that rests its chubby jowl
Upon the plain, and thrusts its bustling beard
Across the lowlands' fleecy counterpane,
Peering beneath our broadest hat-brims' shade
Soul, how long hence to win the Pratzen top ?

SOULT

Some twenty minutes or less, your Majesty
Our troops down there, still mantled by the mist,
Are half upon the way

NAPOLÉON

Good ! Set forthwith

Vandamme and Saint Hilaire to mount the slopes——

Firing begins in the marsh to the right by Tilmitz and the pools, though the thick air yet hides the operations

O, there you are, blind boozy Buxhovden !

Achieve your worst Davout will hold you firm

The head of an aide-de-camp rises through the fog on that side, and he hastens up to NAPOLÉON and his companions, to whom the officer announces what has happened Davout rides off, disappearing legs first into the white stratum that covers the attack

Lannes and Murat, you have concern enough
Here on the left, with Prince Bagration
And all the Austro-Russian' cavalry
Haste off The victory promising to day
Will like a thunder-clap, conclude the war !

The Marshals with their aides gallop away towards their respective divisions Soon the two divisions under SOULT are seen ascending in close column the inclines of the Pratzen height Thereupon the heads of the

Russian centre columns disclose themselves, breaking the sky line of the summit from the other side in a desperate attempt to regain the position vacated by the Russian left. A fierce struggle develops there between SOUL'S divisions and these, who despite their tardy attempt to recover the lost post of dominance, are pressed by the French off the slopes into the lowland.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PINIES (aerial music)

*O Great Necessitator, heed us now !
If it indeed must be
That this day Austria smoke with slaughter,
Quicken the issue as Thou knowest how,
And dull to suffering those whom it befalls
To quit their lodgment in a flesh that galls !*

SEMICHORUS II

*If it be in the future human story
To lift this man to yet intenser glory,
Let the exploit be done
With the least sting, or none,
To those, his kind, at whose expense such pitch is won !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Again ye deprecate the World-Soul's way
That I so long have told ? Then note anew
(Since ye forget) the ordered potencies,
Nerves, sinews, trajects, eddies, ducts of It
The Eternal Urger, pressing change on change*

At once, as earlier, a pieteratural clearness possesses the atmosphere of the battle-field, in which the scene becomes anatomized and the living masses of humanity transparent. The controlling Immanent Will appears therein as a brain like network of currents and ejections, twitching interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*O Innocents, can ye forget
That things to be were shaped and set
Ere mortals and this planet met ?*

SEMICHORUS II

*Stand ye apostrophizing That
Which, working all, works but thereat
Like some sublime fermenting-vat*

SEMICHORUS I

*Flaving throughout its vast content
With strenuously transmutative bent
Though of its aim unsentient ?—*

SEMICHORUS II

*Could ye have seen Its early deeds
Ye would not cry, as one who pleads
For quarter, when a Europe bleeds !*

SEMICHORUS I

*Ere ye, young Pities, had upgrown
From out the deeps where mortals moan
Against a ruling not their own,*

SEMICHORUS II

*He of the Years beheld, and we,
Creation's penitence artistry
Express in forms that now unbe*

SEMICHORUS I

*Tentative dreams from day to day,
Mangle its types, re-knead the clay
In some more palpitating way,*

SEMICHORUS II

*Beheld the rarest wrecked amain,
Whole nigh-perfected species slain
By those that scarce could boast a brain ;*

SEMICHORUS I

*Saw ravage, growth, diminish, aa,
Here peoples sane, there peoples mad,
In choiceless throws of good and bad,*

SEMICHORUS II

*Heard laughter at the ruthless dooms
Which tortured to the eternal glooms
Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs*

CHORUS

*Us Ancients, then, it ill befits
To quake when Slaughter's specter futs
Athwart this field of Austerlitz !*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Pain not their young compassions by such lore,
But hold you mute, and read the battle yonder
The moment marks the day's catastrophe*

SCENE IV

THE SAME THE RUSSIAN POSITION

It is about noon, and the vital spectacle is now near the village of Tilnitz. The fog has dispersed and the sun shines clearly, though without warmth, the ice on the pools gleaming under its radiance.

GENERAL BUXHOVDEN and his aides-de camp have reined up, and remain at pause on a hillock. The General watches through a glass his battalions, which are still disputing the village. Suddenly approach down the track from the upland of Pratzen large companies of Russian infantry helter-skelter. COUNT LANGERON is beheld to be retreating with them, and soon, pale and agitated, he hastens up to GENERAL BUXHOVDEN, whose face is flushed.

LANGERON

While they are upon us you stay idle here !
Prschebyszewsky's column is distraught and rent,
And more than half my own made captive ! Yea,
Kreznowitz carried, and Sokolnitz hemmed
The enemy's whole strength will stound you soon !

BUXHOVDEN

You seem to see the enemy everywhere

LANGERON

You cannot see them, be they here or no !

BUXHOVDEN

I only wait Prschebyszewsky's nearing corps
To join Dokhtórof's to them. Heie they come

SOULT, supported by BERNADOTTE and OUDINOT, having cleared and secured the Pratzen height, his battalions are perceived ascending from it on this side, behind DOKHTÓROF'S division, so placing the latter between themselves and the pools.

LANGERON

You cannot tell the Frenchmen from ourselves !
 These are the victors — Ah — Dokhtorof — lost !

ΔΟΚΗΤΟΡΟΙ'S troops are seen to be retreating towards the water The watchers stand in painful tenseness

BUXHOVDEN

Dokhtórof tell to save him as he may !
 We, Count, must gather up our shaken flesh
 And hurry them by the road through Austerlitz

BUXHOVDEN'S regiments and the remains of LANGERON'S are rallied and collected, and they retreat by way of the hamlet of Ajezd As they go over the summit of a hill BUXHOVDEN looks back LANGERON'S columns which were behind his own, have been cut off by VANDAMME'S division coming down from the Pratzen plateau This and some detachments from ΔΟΚΗΤΟΡΟΙ'S column rush towards the Satschan lake and endeavour to cross it on the ice It cracks beneath their weight At the same moment ΝΑΠΟΛΕΩΝ and his brilliant staff appear on the top of the Pratzen

The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile, and directs a battery near at hand to fire down upon the ice on which the Russians are crossing A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror which fly in all directions Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and then groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas

A general flight of the Russian army from wing to wing is now disclosed involving in its current the EMPEROR ALEXANDER and the EMPEROR FRANCIS with the reserve who are seen towards Austerlitz endeavouring to rally their troops in vain They are swept along by the disordered soldiery

SCENE V

THE SAME NEAR THE WINDMILL OF PALENY

The mill is about seven miles to the southward between the French advanced posts and the Austrians

A bivouac fire is burning ΝΑΠΟΛΕΩΝ, in grey overcoat and beaver hat turned up front and back rides to the spot with BERTHIER, SAUVAN and his aides, and alights He walks to and fro complacently, meditating or talking to BERTHIER Two groups of officers, one from each army stand in the background on their respective sides

NAPOLÉON

What's this of Alexander ? Weep, did he,
 Like his old namesake, but for meaner cause ?
 Ha, ha !

BERTHIER

Would goes, your Majesty, that Colonel Toll,
 One of Field-Marshal Prince Kutuzof's staff,
 In the retreating swirl of overthrow,
 Found Alexander seated on a stone
 Beneath a leafless roadside apple tree,
 Out here by Goding on the Holitsch way,
 His coal-black uniform and snowy plume
 Unmarked, his face disconsolate, his grey eyes
 Mourning in tears the fate of his brave array—
 All flying southward, save the steadfast slain

NAPOLÉON

Poor devil!—But he'll soon get over it—
 Sooner than his employers oversea!—
 Ha!—this will make friend Pitt and England wince,
 And cloud somewhat their lustrous Trafalgar

An open carriage approaches from the direction of Holitsch, accompanied by a small escort of Hungarian guards. NAPOLÉON walks forward to meet it as it draws up, and welcomes the Austrian Emperor who alights. He is wearing a grey cloak over a white uniform, carries a light walking cane, and is attended by PRINCE JOHN OF LICHTENSTEIN, SWAKIENBERG, and others. His fresh-coloured face contrasts strangely with the bluish pallor of NAPOLÉON'S, but it is now thin and anxious.

They formally embrace BERTHIER. PRINCE JOHN, and the rest retire, and the two Emperors are left by themselves before the fire.

NAPOLÉON

Here on the roofless ground do I receive you—
 My only mansion for these two months past!

FRANCIS

Your tenancy thereof has brought such fame
 That it must needs be one which charms you, Sir

NAPOLÉON

Good! Now this war. It has been forced on me
 Just at a crisis most inopportune,
 When all my energies and arms were bent
 On teaching England that her watery walls
 Are no defence against the wrath of France
 Aroused by breach of solemn covenants

FRANCIS

I had no zeal for violating peace
Till ominous events in Italy
Revealed the gloomy truth that France aspires
To conquest there, and undue sovereignty
Since when mine eyes have seen no sign withheld
To signify a change of purposings

NAPOLEON

Yet there were terms distinctly specified
To General Giulay in November past,
Whereon I'd gladly fling the sword aside
To wit that hot armigerent jealousy
Stir us no further on transalpine rule,
I'd take the Isonzo River as our bounds

FRANCIS

Roundly, that I cede all!—And how may stand
Your views as to the Russian forces here?

NAPOLÉON

You have all to lose by that alliance, Sire
Leave Russia! Let the Emperor Alexander
Make his own terms, whereof the first must be
That he retire from Austrian territory
I'll grant an armistice therefor! Anon
I'll treat with him to weld a lasting peace,
Based on some simple understandings, chief,
That Russian armies keep to Russian soil,
And that, moreover, every English keel
Be locked from out the ports of his domain
Meanwhile to you I'll tender this good word
Keep Austria to herself! To Russia bound,
You pay your own costs with your provinces,
And Alexander's likewise therewithal

FRANCIS

I see as much, and long have seen it, Sire,
And standing here the vanquished, let me own
What happier issues might have left unsaid

Long, long I have lost the wish to bind myself
 To Russia's purposings and Russia's risks
 Little do I count these alliances
 With Powers that have no substance seizable !
 As they converse they walk away

AN AUSTRIAN OFFICER

O strangest scene of an eventful life,
 This junction that I witness here to-day !
 An Emperor—in whose majestic veins
 Aeneas and the proud Caesarian line
 Claim yet to live, and those scarce less renowned,
 The dauntless Hawks'-Hold Counts, of gallantry
 So great in fame one thousand years ago—
 To bend with deference and manners mild
 In talk with this adventuring campaigner,
 Raised but by pikes above the common herd !

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN OFFICER

Ay ! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen heights
 In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz
 The Emperors again draw near

FRANCIS

Then, to this armistice, which shall be called
 Immediately at all points, I agree,
 And pledge my word that my august ally
 Accept it likewise, and withdraw his force
 By daily measured march to his own realm

NAPOLÉON

For him I take your word And pray believe
 That rank ambitions are your own, not mine,
 That though I have postured as your enemy,
 And likewise Alexander's, we are one
 In interests, have in all things common cause
 One country sows these mischiefs Europe through
 By her insidious chink of luring ore—
 False-featured England, who, to aggrandize
 Her name, her influence, and her revenues,
 Schemes to impioopriate the whole world's trade,
 And starves and bleeds the folk of other lands

Her rock-rimmed situation walls her off
 Like a slim selfish mollusk in its shell
 From the wide views and fair fraternities
 Which on the mainland we reciprocate,
 And quicks her quest for profit in our woes!

FRANCIS

I am not competent, your Majesty,
 To estimate that country's conscience now,
 Nor to engage on my ally's behalf
 That English ships be shut from Russian trade
 But joyful am I that in all things else
 My promise can be made, and that this day
 Our conference ends in friendship and esteem

NAPOLÉON

I will send Savary at to-morrow's blink
 And make all lucid to the Emperor
 For us, I wholly can avow as mine
 The cordial spirit of your Majesty

They retire towards the carriage of FRANCIS. BERTHIER, SAVARY,
 LICHTLNSTEIN and the suite of officers advance from the background and
 with mutual gestures of courtesy and amicable leave takings the two Emperors
 part company

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Each for himself, his family, his hens,
 To the wan weltering nations who concains, who carns?*

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

*A pertinent query, in truth!—
 But spoil not the sport by your ruth
 'Tis enough to make half
 Yonder zodiac laugh
 When rulers begin to alude
 To their lack of ambition,
 And strong opposition
 To all but the general good!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Hush leavens Events press turn ye westward!

A nebulous curtain draws slowly across

SCENE VI

SHOCKERWICK HOUSE, NEAR BATH

The interior of the Picture Gallery Enter WILTSHIRE the owner, and
PITT who looks emaciated and walks feebly

WILTSHIRE (pointing to a portrait)
Now here you have the lady we discussed
A fine example of his manner, sir ?

PITT

It is a fine example, sir, indeed,—
With that transparency amid the shades,
And those thin blue-green greyish leafages
Behind the pillar in the background there,
Which seem the leaves themselves —Ah, this is Quin
(Moving to another picture)

WILTSHIRE

Yes, Quin A man of varied parts, though rough
And choleric at times Yet, at his best,
As Falstaff, never matched, they say But I
Had not the fate to see him in the flesh

PITT

Churchill well carves him in his "Characters" —
"His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul
In fancied scenes, as in Life's real plan,
He could not for a moment sink the man
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in,
Horatio, Donal, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin "
—He was at Bath when Gainsborough settled there
In that house in the Circus which we know —
I like the portrait much —The brilliancy
Of Gainsborough lies in this his double sway
Sovereign of landscape he, of portraiture
Joint monarch with Sir Joshua Ah ?—that's—hark!
Is that the patter of a horse's hoofs
Along the road ?

WILTSHIRE

I notice nothing, sir.

PITT

It is a gallop, growing quite distinct
And—can it be a messenger for me ?

WILTSHIRE

I hope no ugly European news
To stop the honour of this visit, sir !

They listen The gallop of the horse grows louder and is checked at the door of the house There is a hasty knocking, and a courier, splashed with mud from hard riding, is shown into the gallery He presents a dispatch to PITT, who sits down and hurriedly opens it

PITT (to himself)

O heavy news indeed ! Disastrous, dire !
He appears overcome as he sits, and covers his forehead with his hand

WILTSHIRE

I trust you are not ill, sir ?

PITT (after some moments)

Could I have
A little brandy, sir, quick brought to me ?

WILTSHIRE

In one brief minute
Brandy is brought in, and PITT takes it

PITT

Now leave me, please, alone I'll call anon
Is there a map of Europe handy here ?

WILTSHIRE fetches a map from the library, and spreads it before the minister WILTSHIRE, courier, and servant go out

O God that I should live to see this day !

He remains awhile in a profound reverie, then resumes the reading of the dispatch

“ Defeated—the Allies—quite overthrown
At Austerlitz—last week ”—Where's Austerlitz ?
—But what avails it where the place is now
What corpse is curious on the longitude

And situation of his cemetery !
 The Austrians and the Russians overcome,
 That vast adventuring army is set free
 To bend unhindered strength against our strand
 So do my plans through all these plodding years
 Announce them built in vain !
 His heel on Europe, monarchies in chains
 To France, I am as though I had never been !

He gloomily ponders the dispatch and the map some minutes longer At
 last he rises with difficulty and rings the bell

A servant enters

Call up my carriage, please you, now at once,
 And tell your master I return to Bath
 This moment—I may want a little help
 In getting to the door here

SERVANT

Sir, I will,
 And summon you my master instantly

He goes out and re enters with WILTSHIRE PITT is assisted from the
 room

PITT

Roll up that map 'Twill not be needed now
 These ten years ! Realms, laws, peoples, dynasties,
 Are churning to a pulp within the maw
 Of empire-making Lust and personal Gain !

[Exit PITT WILTSHIRE, and servant and in a few minutes
 the carriage is heard driving off, and the scene closes

SCENE VII

PARIS A STREET LEADING TO THE TUILLERIES

It is night, and the dim oil lamps reveal a vast concourse of citizens of
 both sexes around the Palace gates and in the neighbouring thoroughfares

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of Rumour)

*Thou may'st descend and join this crowd awhile,
 And speak what things shall come into thy mouth*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I'll harken ! I wouldn't miss it for the groans of another
Austerlitz !*

The Spirit of Rumour enters on the scene in the disguise of a young foreigner

SPIRIT (to a street-woman)

Lady, a late hour this to be afoot !

WOMAN

But such is meet in gallant dames like me
For now He nears !—after a three months' whirl
Of victories won on fields whose homely names
Had never swept the ear of mortal man
Beyond the haunts of neighbour peasantry,
But, cymballed now by deathless deeds, become
Familiar rhythms in remotest homes !

SPIRIT

Rare ! To it again I could give heed all night

WOMAN

Poor profit, then, to me from my true trade,
Wherein hot competition is so rife
Aheadv, since these victories brought to town
So many foreign jobbers in my line,
That I'd best hold my tongue from praise of fame !
However, one is caught by popular zeal,
And though five midnights have not brought a sou,
I, too, chant *Jubilate* like the rest —

In courtesies have haughty monarchs vied
Towards the Conqueror ! who, with men-at-arms
One quarter theirs, has vanquished by his nerve
Vast musterings four-hundred-thousand strong,
And given new tactics to the art of war
Unparalleled in Europe's history !

SPIRIT

*What man is this, whose might thou blazonest so—
Who makes the earth to tremble, shakes old thrones,
And turns the plains to wilderness ?*

WOMAN

Dost ask

As ignorant, yet asking can define ?
What mean you, traveller ?

SPIRIT

*I am a stranger here,
A wandering wight, whose life has not been spent
This side the glooe, though I can speak the tongue*

WOMAN

You an has truth in't, but your state is strange !
Had I a husband he should tackle thee

SPIRIT

*Dozens thou hast had—batches more than she
Samarra knew, if now thou hast not one !*

WOMAN

Wilt take the situation from this hour ?

SPIRIT

Thou know'st not what thy frailty asks, good dame !

WOMAN

Well, learn in small the Empeior's chronicle,
As gleaned from what my soldier-husbands say —
Some five-and-forty standards of his foes
Are brought to Paris, borne triumphantly
In poud procession through the surging streets,
Ever as brands of fame to shine aloft
In dim-lit senate-halls and city aisles

SPIRIT

*Fair Munich sparkled with festivity
As there awhile he tarried, and was met
By the gay Josephine your Empress here —
There, too, Eugène—*

WOMAN

Napoleon's stepson he —

SPIRIT .

*Received for gift the hand of fair Princess
Augusta (daughter of Bavaria's crown,
Forced from her plighted troth to Badin's heir),
And, to complete his honouring, was hailed
Successor to the throne of Italy*

WOMAN

How know you, ere this news has got abroad ?

SPIRIT

*Channels have I the common people lack —
There, on the nonce, the forenamed Badin prince
Was joined to Stephanie Beauharnais, her
Who stands as daughter to the man we wait,
Some say as more*

WOMAN

They do ? Then such not I
Can revolution's dregs so soil thy soul
That thou shouldst doubt the eldest son thereof ?
Tis dangerous to insinuate nowadays !

SPIRIT

*Right ! Lady many-spoused, more charity
Uphrims in thee than in some loftier ones
Who would not name thee with their white-washed
tongues —
Enough I am one whom, didst thou know my name,
Thou would'st not grudge a claim to speak his mind*

WOMAN

A thousand pardons, sir

SPIRIT

Resume thy tale
If so thou wishest

WOMAN

Nay, but you know best——

SPIRIT

*How laurelled progress through applauding crowds
Has marked his journey home How Strasburg town
Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, acclaimed him like the rest*

*How pageantry would here have welcomed him,
Had not his speed outstript intelligence
—Now will a glimpse of him repay thee Hark !*

Shouts rise and increase in the distance, announcing BONAPARTE'S approach

*Well, Buonaparte has revived by land,
But not by sea On that thwart element
Never will he incorporate his dream,
And float as master !*

WOMAN

What shall hinder him ?

SPIRIT

That which has hereto England, so to say

WOMAN

But she's in straits She's lost her Nelson now,
(A worthy man he loved a woman well !)
George dools and babbles in a darkened room,
Her heaven-born Minister declines apace,
All smooths the Emperor's sway

SPIRIT

*Tales have two sides,
Sweet lady Vamped-up versions reach thee here —
That Austerlitz was lustrous none ignores,
But would it shock thy garrulousness to know
That the true measure of this Trafalgar—
Utter defeat, ay, France's naval death—
Your Emperor bade be hid ?*

WOMAN

 The seer's gift
Has never plenteously endowed me, sir,
As in appearance you But to plain sense
Things seem as stated

SPIRIT

*We'll let seemings be —
But know, these English take to liquid life
Right patly—nursed therefo. in infancy*

*By rimes and rains which creep into their blood,
Till like seeks like The sea is their dry land,
And, as on cobbles you, they wayfare there*

WOMAN

Heaven prosper, then, their watery wayfarings
If they'll leave us the land !—(The Imperial carriage appears)
The Emperor !—

Long live the Emperor !—He's the best by land

BONAPARTE'S carriage arrives without an escort The street lamps shine
on, and reveal the EMPRESS JOSAPHINE seated beside him The plaudits of
the people grow boisterous as they hail him Victor of Austerlitz The more
active run after the carriage which turns in from the Rue St Honoré to the
Carrousel, and thence vanishes into the Court of the Tuileries

WOMAN

May all success attend his next exploit !

SPIRIT

*Namely to put the knife in England's trade,
And teach her treaty-manners—if he can !*

WOMAN

I like not your queer knowledge, creepy man
There's weirdness in your air I'd call you ghost
Had not the Goddess Reason laid all such
Past Mother Church's cunning to restore
—Adieu I'll not be yours to night I'd stave first !
She withdraws The crowd wastes away, and the Spirit vanishes

SCENE VIII

PUTNEY BOWLING GREEN HOUSE

First bedroom, from the landing without It is afternoon At the
back of the room is seen through the doorway is a curtained bed beside
which a woman sits the LADY HESTER STANHOPE Bending over a table
at the front of the room is SIR WALTER FARQUHAR, the physician
PARSLOW the footman and another servant are near the door

TOMLINI, Bishop of Lincoln, enters

FARQUHAR (in a subdued voice)

I grieve to call your lordship up again,
But symptoms lately have disclosed themselves
That mean the knell to the frail life in him.

And whatsoever things of gravity
 It may be needful to communicate,
 Let them be spoken now Time may not serve
 If they be much delayed

TOMLINE

Ah, stands it thus ?
 The name of his disease is—Austerlitz !
 His brow's inscription has been Austerlitz
 From that duc morning in the month just past
 When tongues of rumour twanged the word across
 From its hid nook on the Moravian plains

FARQUHAR

And yet he might have borne it, had the weight
 Of governmental shackles been unclasped,
 Even partly, from his limbs last Lammastide,
 When that despairing journey to the King
 At Gloucester Lodge by Wessex shore was made
 To beg such But relief the King refused
 "Why want you Fox ? What—Grenville and his
 friends ?"

He harped "You are sufficient without these—
 Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war !"
 And fide that would rather snap than shrink
 Held out no longer Now the upshot nears
 LADY HESTER ST ANHOPE turns her head and comes forward

LADY HESTER

I am grateful you are here again, good friend !
 He's sleeping some light seconds, but once more
 Has asked for tidings of Lord Harrowby,
 And murmured of his mission to Berlin
 As Europe's haggard hope, if, sure, it be
 That any hope remain !

TOMLINE

There's no news yet —
 These several days while I have been sitting by him
 He has inquired the quarter of the wind,
 And where that moment beaked the stable-cock
 When I said "East," he answered "That is well !"
 Those are the breezes that will speed him home !"
 So cling his heart-strings to his country's cause

FARQUHAR

I fear that Wellesley's visit here by now
Strung him to tensest strain He quite broke down,
And has fast faded since

LADY HESTER

Ah ! now he wakes
Please come and speak to him as you would wish
(to TOMLINE)

LADY HESTER, TOMLINE and FARQUHAR retire behind the bed where in a short time voices are heard in prayer. Afterwards the Bishop goes to a writing-table and LADY HESTER comes to the door-way. Steps are heard on the stairs, and PITT's friend ROSE, the President of the Board of Trade, appears on the landing and makes inquiries

LADY HESTER (whispering)

He wills the wardeny of his affairs
To his old friend the Bishop But his words
Bespeak too much anxiety for me,
And underrate his services so far
That he has doubts if his high deeds deserve
Such size of recognition by the State
As would award him pensions to his kin
He had been fain to write down his intents,
But the quill dropped from his unmuscl'd hand —
Now his friend Tomline pens what he dictates
And gleans theippings of his last desires

ROSE and LADY HESTER turn. They see the Bishop bending over the bed with a sheet of paper on which he has previously been writing. A little later he dips a quill and holds it within the bed-curtain spreading the paper beneath. A thin white hand emerges from behind the curtain and signs the paper. The Bishop beckons forward the two servants who also sign.

FARQUHAR on one side of the bed and TOMLINE on the other are spoken to by the dying man. The Bishop afterwards withdraws from the bed and comes to the landing where the others are

TOMLINE

A list of his directions has been drawn,
And feeling somewhat more at mental ease
He asks Sir Walter if he has long to live
Farquhar just answered, in a soothing tone,

That hope still frailly breathed recovery
 At this my dear friend smiled and shook his head,
 As if to say "I can translate your words,
 But I reproach not friendship's lullabies"

ROSE

Rest he required, and rest was not for him

FARQUHAR comes forward as they wait

FARQUHAR

His spell of concentration on these things,
 Determined now, that long have wasted him,
 Has left him in a numbing lethargy,
 From which I fear he may not rouse to strength
 For speech with earth again

ROSE

But hark He does
 They listen

PITT

My country! How I leave my country!

TOMLINE

Immense the matter those poor words contain! Ah,—

ROSE

Still does his soul stay wrestling with that theme,
 And still it will, even semi-consciously,
 Until the drama's done

They continue to converse by the doorway in whispers PITT sinks slowly into a stupor, from which he never awakens

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of the Years)

Do you intend to speak to him ere the close?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, I have spoke too often! Time and time,
 When all Earth's light has lain on the nether side,
 And yapping midnight winds have leapt on roofs,
 And raised for him an evil harlequinade
 Of national disasters in long train,*

*That tortured him with harrowing grimace,
Have I communed with that intelligence
Now I would leave him to pass out in peace,
And seek the silence unperturbedly*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Even ITS official Spirit can show ruth
At man's fag end, when his destruction's sure*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It suits us ill to cavil each with each
I might retort I only say to thee
ITS slaves we are ITS slaves must ever be*

CHORUS (aerial music)

*Yea, from the Void we fetch, like these,
And tarry till That please
To null us by Whose stress we emanate —
Our incorporeal sense,
Our overseeings, our supernal state,
Our readings Why and Whence,
Are but the flower of Man's intelligence,
And that but an unreckoned incident
Of the all-urging Will, rapidly magnipotent*

A gauze or shadow overdraws

PART SECOND

CHARACTERS

I PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

{ THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS	{ THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR
{ CHORUS OF THE YEARS	{ CHORUS OF RUMOURS
{ THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES	THE SHADE OF THE EARTH
{ CHORUS OF THE PITIES	
{ SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC	SPIRIT MESSENGERS
{ CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS	RECORDING ANGELS

II PERSONS

The names printed in italics are those of mute figures

MEN

GEORGE THE THIRD	<i>ment and Persons of Quality</i>
THE PRINCE OF WALES, afterwards	<i>and Office</i>
PRINCE REGENT	—
<i>The Royal Dukes</i>	
FOY	<i>Sir Arthur Wellesley afterwards</i>
PERCEVAL	<i>Lord Wellington</i>
CASTLEREAGH	SIR JOHN MOORE
AN UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE	SIR JOHN HOPE
SHERIDAN	<i>Sir David Baird</i>
THE DUKE OF BLDFOKD	<i>General Buresford</i>
LORD MORIA	COLONEL ANDERSON
TWO YOUNG LORDS	COLONEL GRAHAM
<i>Lords Yarmouth and Keith</i>	MAJOR COBURN PRINCIPAL
ANOTHER LORD	AIDE-DE CAMP TO MOORE
<i>Other Peers, Ambassadors, Ministers,</i>	CAPTAIN HARDINGE
<i>ex-Ministers, Members of Parlia-</i>	<i>Paget, Fraser Hill, Napier</i>

A CAPTAIN OF HUSSARS AND
OTHERS

*Other English Generals, Colonels,
Aides, Couriers, and Military
Officers*

TWO SPIES

TWO ARMY SURGEONS

AN ARMY CHAPLAIN

A SERGEANT OF THE WAGGON-
TRAIN

A SERGEANT OF THE FORTY-
THIRD

TWO SOLDIERS OF THE NINTH
English Forces

DESETERS AND STRAGGLERS

DR WILLIS

SIR HENRY HALFORD

DR HEBERDEN

DR BAILLIE

THE KING'S APOTHECARY

A GENTLEMAN

TWO ATTENDANTS ON THE KING

MEMBERS OF A LONDON CLUB

AN ENGLISHMAN IN VIENNA

TROTTER, SECRETARY TO FOX

MR BAGOT

MR FORTH, MASTER OF CER-
MONIES

SERVANTS

A Blau, A Constable, etc

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Joseph Bonaparte

*Louis and Jérôme Bonaparte, and
other Members of Napoléon's
Family*

CAMBACÈRES ARCH CHANCELLOR

TALLEYRAND

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Canlarincourt

*Leblun, Duroc, Prince of Neufchâtel,
Grand-Duke of Berg*

Eugène de Beauharnais

CHAMPAGNY, FOREIGN MINISTER

DE BAUSSET, CHAMBERLAIN

MURAT

SOULT

MASSÉNA

BERTHIER

JUNOT

FOY

LOISON

*Ney, Lannes and other French
Marshals, general and reg-
imental Officers, Aides, and
Couriers*

TWO FRENCH SUBALTERNS

ANOTHER FRENCH OFFICER
French Forces

*Grand Marshal, Grand Almoners,
Heralds, and other Officials at
Napoléon's marriage*

ABBÉ DE PRADT, CHAPEL-MASTER
Courier, First Physician

BOURDIEU, SECOND PHY-
SICIAN

DUBOIS, ACCOUCHEUR

Masters at a Ball

TWO SERVANTS AT THE TUI-
LIERIES

A PARISIAN CROWD

GUILLET DE LA GEVRILLIERE, A
CONSPIRATOR

Louis XVIII of France

French Princes in England

THE KING OF PRUSSIA

Prince Henry of Prussia

Prince Royal of Bavaria

PRINCE HOHENLOHE

*Generals Ruchel, Tauenzien, and
Attendant Officers*

Prussian Forces

PRUSSIAN STRAGGLERS

BERLIN CITIZENS

CARLOS IV, KING OF SPAIN

FLRNRANDO, PRINCE OF ASTURIAS,

Son to the King

GODOY, "PRINCE OF" PEACE,

Lover of the Queen

COUNT OF MONIJO

VISCOUNT MATEROSA }
DON DIEGO DE LA } Spanish
VEGA } Deputies

Godoy's Guards and other Soldiers

SPANISH CITIZENS

A LIFE-GUARDSMAN OF ARANJUA

A SLAVANT TO GODOY

Spanish Forces

Camp-Followers

Muleteers

FRANCIS, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

METTERNICH

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN MINISTER

SCHWARZENBERG

D'AUDENARDF, AN EQUERRY

AUSTRIAN OFFICERS

AIDES-DE-CAMP

Austrian Forces

Counsellors and Secretaries

VIENNESE CITIZENS

THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER

The Grand Duke Constantine

Prince Iabanoff

Count Lieven

Generals Bennigsen, Ourwaroff, and

others

Officers in attendance on Alexander

WOMEN

CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES

DUCHESS OF YORK

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND

MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY

MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD

Other Peersesses

MRS FITZHERBERT

*Ambassadors Wives, Wives of
Ministers and Members of
Parliament, and other Ladies
of Note*

THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE

HORTENSE QUEEN OF HOLLAND

The Mother of Napoleon

*Princess Pauline, and others of
Napoleon's Family*

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO

MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU

MADAME BLAISE, NURSE TO
MARIE LOUISE

*Wives of French Ministers, and of
other Officials*

Other Ladies of the French Court

DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME

LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA

The Countess Iosé, Lady-in-Waiting

BERLIN LADIES

MARIA LUISA QUEEN OF SPAIN

TEREZA OF BOURGON, WIFE OF
GODOY

DOÑA JOSEFA TUDO, MISTRESS OF
GODOY

Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen

A Servant

M. LOUISA BEATRIX EMPRESS OF
AUSTRIA

THE ARCHDUCHESS MARIA LOUISA
afterwards the EMPRESS MARIE
LOUISE

MADAME METTERNICH

LADIES OF THE AUSTRIAN COURT

THE EMPRESS-MOTHER OF RUSSIA

GRAND DUCHESS ANNE OF RUSSIA

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

LONDON FOX'S LODGINGS, ARLINGTON STREET

FOX, the Foreign Secretary in the new Ministry of All the Talents, sits at a table writing. He is a stout, swarthy man with shaggy eyebrows, and his breathing is somewhat obstructed. His clothes look as though they had been slept in. TROTTER, his private secretary, is writing at another table near

A servant enters

SERVANT

Another stranger presses to see you, sir

FOX (without raising his eyes)

Oh, another. What's he like?

SERVANT

A foreigner, sir, though not so out-at-elbows as might be thought from the denomination. He says he's from Gravesend, having lately left Paris, and that you sent him a passport. He comes with a police-officer.

FOX

Ah, to be sure. I remember. Bring him in, and tell the officer to wait outside. (Servant goes out.) Trotter, will you leave us for a few minutes? But be within hail.

The secretary retires, and the servant shows in a man who calls himself GUILLET DE LA GEVRILLIERE—a tall, thin figure of thirty, with restless dark eyes. The door being shut behind him, he is left alone with the minister. FOX points to a seat, leans back, and surveys his visitor.

GEVRILLIÈRE

Thanks to you, sir, for this high privilege
 Of hailing England, and of entering here
 Without a fore-extended confidence
 Like this of yours, my plans would not have sped

(A pause)

Europe, alas ! sir, has her waiting foot
 Upon the sill of further slaughter-scenes !

FOX

I fear it is so !—In your lines you wrote,
 I think, that you are a true Frenchman born ?

GEVRILLIÈRE

I did, sir

FOX

How contrived you, then, to cross ?

GEVRILLIÈRE

It was from Embden that I shipped for Gravesend,
 In a small sailer called the "Toby," sir,
 Masked under Prussian colours Embden I reached
 On foot, on horseback, and by sundry shifts,
 From Paris over Holland, secretly

FOX

And you are stored with tidings of much pith,
 Whose tenour would be priceless to the state ?

GEVRILLIÈRE

I am It is, in brief, no more nor less
 Than means to mitigate and even end
 These welfare-wasting wars, ay, usher in
 A painless spell of peace

FOX

Prithce speak on

No statesman can desire it more than I

GEVRILLIÈRE (looking to see that the door is shut)
 No nation, sir, can live its natural life,
 Or think its thoughts in these days unassailed,
 No crown-capt head enjoy tranquillity

The fount of such high spring-tide of disorder,
Fevered disquietude, and forceful death,
Is One,— a single man He—need I name?—
The ruler is of France

FOX

Well, in the past
I fear that it has looked so But we see
Good reason still to hope that broadening views,
Politer wisdom, now are helping him
To saner guidance of his arrogant car

GEVRILLIÈRE

The generous hope will never be fulfilled !
Ceasing to bluff, then ceases he to be
None sees that written larger than himself

FOX

Then what may be the valued revelation
That you can unlock in such circumstance ?
Sir, I incline to spell you as a spy
And not the honest help for honest men
You gave you out to be !

GEVRILLIÈRE

I beg you, sir,
To spare me that suspicion Never a thought
Could be more groundless Solemnly I vow
That notwithstanding what his signals show
The Emperor of France is as I say —
Yet bring I good assurance, and declare
A medicine for all bruised Europe's sores !

FOX (impatiently)

Well, parley to the point, for I confess
No new negotiation do I note
That you can open up to work such cure

GEVRILLIÈRE

To speak then to the point permit me, sir —
The sovereign remedy for an ill effect
Is the extinction of its evil cause

Safely and surely how to compass this
 I have the weighty honour to disclose
 Certain immunities being guaranteed
 By those your power can influence, and yourself

FOX (astonished)

Assassination ?

GEVRILLIÈRE

I care not for names !

A deed's true name is as its purpose is
 The lexicon of Liberty and Peace
 Defines not this deed as assassination ,
 Though maybe it is writ so in the tongue
 Of courts and universal tyranny

FOX

Why brought you this proposal here to me ?

GEVRILLIÈRE

My knowledge of your love of things humane,
 Things free, things fair, of truth, of tolerance,
 Right, justice, national felicity,
 Prompted belief and hope in such a man !—
 The matter is by now well forwarded,
 A house at Plassy hired as pivot-point
 From which the sanct intention can be worked,
 And soon made certain To our good allies
 No risk attaches, merely to ourselves

FOX (touching a private bell)

Sir, your unconscioned hardihood confounds me
 And your mind's measure of my character
 Insults it sorely By your late-sent lines
 Of specious import, by your bland address,
 I have been led to prattle hopefully
 With a cut-throat confessed !

The head constable and the secretary enter at the same moment

Ere worse befall,

Sir, up and get you gone most dexterously !
 Conduct this man, lose never sight of him (to the officer)
 Till haled aboard some anchor-weighing craft
 Bound to remotest coasts from us and France

GEVRILLIÈRE (unmoved)

How you may handle me concerns me little
 The project will as roundly ripe itself
 Without as with me Trusty souls remain,
 Though my far bones bleach white on austial shores !—
 I thank you for the audience Long ere this
 I might have left your life ! Av, notice here—

(He produces a dagger, which is snatched from him)

They need not have done that ! Even had you risen
 To wrestle with, insult, strike, pinion me,
 It would have lain unused In hands like mine
 And my allies', the man of peace is safe,
 Treat as he may our corporal tenement
 In his misreading of a moral code

[Exit GEVRILLIÈRE and the constable]

FOX

Trotter, indeed you well may stare at me !
 I look warm, eh ?—and I am windless, too ,
 I have sufficient reason to be so
 That dignified and pensive gentleman
 Was a bold bravo, waiting for his chance
 He sketched a scheme for murdering Bonaparte,
 Either—as in my haste I understood—
 By shooting from a window as he passed,
 Or by some other wily and stealthy means
 That haunt sad brains which brood on despotism,
 But lack the tools to justly cope therewith !
 On later thoughts I feel not fully sure
 If, in my ferment, I did right in this
 No , hail at once the man in charge of him,
 And give the word that he is to be detained

The secretary goes out FOX walks to the window in deep reflection till
 the secretary returns

SECRETARY

I was in time, sir He has been detained

FOX

Now what does strict state honour ask of me ?—
 No less than that I bare this popping plot
 To the French ruler and our fiercest foe !—

Maybe 'twas but a hoax to pocket pay,
 And yet it can mean more
 The man's indifference to his own vague doom
 Beamed out as one exalted trait in him,
 And showed the altitude of his rash dream!—
 Well, now I'll get me on to Downing Street,
 There to draw up a note to Talley and
 Retailing him the facts—What signature
 Subscribed this desperate fellow when he wrote?

SECRETARY

“Guillet de la Gevillière” Here it stands

FOX

Doubtless it was a false one Come along

(Looking out of the window)

Ah—here's Sir Francis Vincent he'll go with us
 Ugh, what a twinge! Time signals that he draws
 Towards the twelfth stroke of my working-day!
 I fear old England soon must voice her speech
 With Europe through another mouth than mine!

SECRETARY

I trust not, sir Though you should rest awhile
 The very servants half are invalid
 From the unceasing labours of your post,
 And these cloaked visitors of every clime
 That market on your magnanimity
 To gain an audience morning, night, and noon,
 Leaving you no respite

FOX

'Tis true, 'tis true —
 How I shall love my summer holiday
 At pleasant Saint-Ann's Hill!

He leans on the secretary's arm, and they go out

SCENE II

THE ROUTE BETWEEN LONDON AND PARIS

A view now nocturnal, now diurnal, from on high over the Straits of Dover, and stretching from city to city. By night Paris and London seem each as a little swarm of lights surrounded by a halo, by day as a confused glitter of white and grey. The Channel between them is as a mirror reflecting the sky, brightly or faintly, as the hour may be.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*What mean these couriers shooting shuttlewise
To Paris and to London, turn and turn?*

RUMOURS (chanting in antiphons)

I

*The aforesaid tidings from the minister, spokesman in England's
cause to state afar,*

II

*Traverse the waters borne by one of such, and thence Bonaparte
responses are*

I

*"The principles of honour and of truth which ever actuate the
sender's mind*

II

*"Herein are written largely! Take our thanks we read that
this conjuncture undesigned*

I

*"Unfolds felicitous means of showing you that still our eyes are
set, as yours, on peace,*

II

*"To which great end the Treaty of Amiens must be the ground-
work of our amities"*

I

*From London then "The path to anity the King of England
studies to pursue,*

II

"With Russia hand in hand he is yours to close the long convulsions thrilling Europe through"

I

Still fare the shadowy missioners across, by Dover-road and Calais Channel-track,

II

From Thames-side towers to Paris palace-gates, from Paris leisurely to London back

I

Till thus speaks France "Much grief it gives us that, being pledged to treat, one Emperor with one King,

II

"You yet have struck a jarring counternote and tone that keys not with such promising

I

"In these last words, then, of this pregnant parle, I trust I may persuade your Excellency

II

"That in no circumstance, on no pretence, a party to our pact can Russia be"

SPIRIT SINISTER

Fortunately for the manufacture of corpses by machinery Napoleon sticks to this veto, and so wards off the awkward catastrophe of a general peace descending upon Europe Now England

RUMOURS (continuing)

I

Thereon speeds down through Kent and Picardy, evenly as some southing sky-bird's shade

II

"We gather not from your Imperial lines a reason why our words should be reweighed

I

"We hold to Russia not as our ally that is to be she stands full-plighted so,

II

"Thus trembles peace upon this balance-point will you that Russia be let in or no?"

I

Then France rolls out rough words across the street "To treat with you confederate with the Tsar,

II

"Presumes us sunk in sloughs of shamefulness from which we yet stand gloriously afar!"

I

"The English army must be Flanders-flung, and entering Picardy with pompous prance,

II

"To warrant such! Enough Our comfort is, the crime of further strife lies not with France."

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Alas! what prayer will save the struggling lands,
Whose lives are ninepins to these bowling hands?*

CHORUS OF RUMOURS

*France secretly with—Russia plights her troth!
Britain, that lonely isle, is sluried by both*

SPIRIT SINISTER

It is as neat as an uncovered check at chess! You may now mark Fox's blank countenance at finding himself thus rewarded for the good turn done to Bonaparte, and at the extraordinary conduct of his chummy friend the Muscovite

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*His hand so trembles it can scarce retain
The quill wherewith he lets Lord Yarmouth know
Reserve is no more needed!*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Now enters another character of this remarkable little piece—
Lord Lauderdale—and again the messengers fly !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But what strange figure, pale and noseless, comes,
By us perceived, unrecognized by those,
Into the very closet and retreat
Of England's Minister ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*The Tipstaff he
Of the Will, the Many-masked, my good friend Death —
The statesman's feeble form you may perceive
Now hustled into the Invisible,
And the unfinished game of Dynasties
Left to proceed without him !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Here, then, ends
My hope for Europe's reason-wrought repose !
He was the friend of peace—did his great best
To shud her balms upon humanity,
And now he's gone ! No substitute remains*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Ay, the remainder of the episode is frankly farcical. Negotia-
tions are again affected, but finally you discern Lauderdale
applying for passports, and the English Parliament declares to
the nation that peace with France cannot be made*

RUMOURS (concluding)

I

*The smouldering dudgeon of the Prussian king, meanwhile, upon
the horizon's rim afar*

II

*Bursts into running flame, that all his signs of friendliness were
met by moves for war*

1

*Attend and hear, for hear ye faintly may, his manifesto made at
Erfurt town,*

II

*That to arms only dares he now confide the safety and the honour
of his crown !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Draw down the curtain, then, and overscreen
This too-protracted verbal fencing-scene,
And let us turn to clanging foot and horse,
Ordinance, and all the engine of Force !*

Clouds close over the perspective

SCENE III

THE STREETS OF BERLIN

It is afternoon, and the thoroughfares are crowded with citizens in an excited and anxious mood. A central path is left open for some expected arrival.

There enters on horseback a fair woman whose rich brown curls stream flutteringly in the breeze, and whose long blue habit flaps against the flank of her curvetting white mare. She is the renowned LOUISA QULIN OF PRUSSIA, riding at the head of a regiment of hussars and wearing their uniform. As she passes along the thronging citizens acclaim her enthusiastically.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Who is this fragile Fair, in fighting trim ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*She is the pride of Prussia, whose resolve
Gives ballast to the purpose of her spouse,
And holds him to what men call governing*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Queens have engaged in war, but war's loud trane
Rings with a roar unnatural, fitful, forced,
Practised by woman's hands !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Of her we view
The enterprise is that of scores of men,
The strength but half-a-one's*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Would fate had ruled
The valour had been his, hers but the charm '*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*But he has nothing on't, and she has all
The shameless satires of the bulletins
Despatched to Paris, thence the wide world through
Disturb the dreams of her by those who love her,
And thus her brave adventures for the realm
Have blurred her picture, souled her gentleness,
And wrought her credit harm*

FIRST CITIZEN (vociferously)

Yes, by God send an ultimatum to Paris forthwith, that's what we'll do, by God This Confederation of the Rhine was the evil thought of an evil man bent on ruining us !

SECOND CITIZEN

This country double-faced and double-tongued,
This Fiance, or rather say, indeed, this Man—
(Peoples are honest dealers in the mass)—
This man, to sign a stealthy scroll with Russia
That shuts us off from all indemnities,
While swearing faithful friendship wth our King,
And, still professing our safe wardenry,
To fatten other kingdoms at our cost,
Insults us grossly, and makes Europe clang
With echoes of our wrongs The little states
Of this antique and homely German land
Are severed from their blood-allies and kin—
Hereto of one tradition, interest, hope—
In calling lord this rank adventurer,
Who'll thrust them as a sword against ourselves —
Surely Great Frederick sweats within his tomb !

THIRD CITIZEN

Well, we awake, though we have slumbered long,
And She is sent by Heaven to kindle us

The QUEEN approaches to pass back again with her suite The vocifero
applause is repeated They regard her as she nears

To cry her Amazon, a blusterer,
 A brazen comrade of the bold diagoons
 Whose uniform she dons ! Her, whose each act
 Shows but a mettled modest woman's zeal,
 Without a hazard of her dignity
 Or moment's sacrifice of seemliness,
 To fend off ill from home !

FOURTH CITIZEN (entering)

The tidings fly that Russian Alexander
 Declines with emphasis to ratify
 The pact of his ambassador with France,
 And that the offer made the English King
 To compensate the latter at our cost
 Has not been taken

THIRD CITIZEN

And it never will be !
 Thus evil does not always flourish, faith
 Throw down the gage while God is fair to us,
 He may be foul anon ! (A pause)

FIFTH CITIZEN (entering)

Our ambassador Lucchesini is already leaving Paris. He
 could stand the Emperor no longer, so the Emperor said he
 could not stand Lucchesini. Knobelsdorf, who takes his place,
 has decided to order his snuff by the ounce and his candles by
 the pound, lest he should not be there long enough to use more

The QUEEN goes by, and they gaze at her and at the escort of soldiers

Haven't we soldiers ? Haven't we the Duke of Brunswick to
 command 'em ? Haven't we provisions, hey ? Haven't we
 fortresses and an Elbe, to bat the bounce of an invader ?

The cavalcade passes out of sight and the crowd draws off

FIRST CITIZEN

By God, I must to beer and 'baccho, to soften my rage !

[Exeunt citizens]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*So doth the Will objectify Itself
 In likeness of a sturdy people's wrath,*

*Which takes no count of the new trends of time,
Trusting ebb'd glory in a present need —
What if their strength should equal not their fire,
And their devotion dull their vigilance? —
Uncertainly, by fits, the Will doth work
In Brunswick's blood, their chief, as in themselves,
It ramifies in streams that intermit
And make their movement vague, old-fashioned, slow
To foil the modern methods counterposed !*

Evening descends on the city and it grows dusk. The soldiers being dismissed from duty, some young officers in a frolic of defiance halt draw their swords and whet them on the steps of the FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S residence as they pass. The noise of whetting is audible through the street.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*The soul of a nation distrest
Is aflame,
And heaving with eager unrest
In its arm
To assert its old prowess, and stouten its chronicle'd fame !*

SEMICHORUS I

*It boils in a boisterous thrill
Through the mart,
Unconscious well-nigh as the Will
Of its part
Would it wholly might be so, and feel not the forthcoming
smart !*

SEMICHORUS II

*In conclaves no voice of reflection
Is heard,
King, Councillors, grudge in circumspection
A word,
And victory is visioned, and seemings as facts are averred*

CHORUS

*Yea, the soul of a nation distrest
Is aflame,
And heaving with eager unrest
In its arm
At supreme desperations to blazon the national name !*
Midnight strikes, lights are extinguished one by one, and the scene disappears.

SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF JENA

Day has just dawned through a grey October morn'g. The French, with their backs to the nebulous light, loom out and show themselves to be already under arms, LANNES holding the centre, NEY the right, SOULT the extreme right, and AUGEREAU the left. The Imperial Guard and MURAT'S cavalry are drawn up on the Landgrafenberg behind the centre of the French position. In a valley stretching along to the foot of this height flows northward towards the Elbe the little river Saale, on which the town of Jena stands.

On the regular plateau in front of the French lines, and almost close to the latter, are the Prussians under TAUENZIEHN, and FARW on their right near towards Weimar the bulk of the army under PRINCE HOHENLOHE. The DUKE OF BRUNSWICK (father of the Princess of Wales) is twelve miles off with his force at Auerstadt, in the valley of the Ilm.

Enter NAPOLÉON and men bearing torches who escort him. He moves along the front of his troops and is lost to view behind the mist and surrounding objects. But his voice is audible.

NAPOLÉON

Keep you good guard against their cavalry,
In past repute the formidablest known,
And such it may be now, so asks our heed
Receive it, then, in square, unflinchingly —
Remember, men, last year you captured Ulm,
So make no doubt that you will vanquish these

SOLDIERS

Long live the Emperor! Advance, advance!

NAPOLÉON

Nay, caution, men! 'Tis mine to time your deeds
By light of long experience yours to do them

DUMB SHOW

Almost immediately glimpses reveal that LANNES' corps is moving forward, and amid an unbroken clatter of firelocks spreads out further and wider upon the stretch of country in front of the Landgrafenberg. The Prussians surprised at discerning in the fog such masses of the enemy close at hand, recede towards the Ilm.

From PRINCE HOHENLOHE, who is with the body of the Prussians on the Weimar road to the south, comes perspiring the bulk of the infantry to rally the retreating regiments of TAUENZIEHN, and he hastens up himself with the

cavalry and artillery. The action is renewed between him and NEY as the clocks of Jena strike ten.

But AUGEREAU is seen coming to NEY's assistance on one flank of the Prussians, SOULT bearing down on the other, while NAPOLEON on the Landgrafenberg orders the Imperial Guard to advance. The doomed Prussians are driven back, this time more decisively, falling in great numbers and losing many as prisoners as they reel down the sloping land towards the banks of the Ilm behind them. GENERAL RUCHTEL, in a last despairing effort to rally, faces the French onset in person and alone. He receives a bullet through the chest and falls dead.

The crisis of the struggle is reached though the battle is not over. NAPOLEON discerning from the Landgrafenberg that the decisive moment has come, directs MURAT to sweep forward with all his cavalry. It engages the shattered Prussians, surrounds them, and cuts them down by thousands.

From behind the horizon, a dozen miles off, between the din of guns in the visible battle, there can be heard an ominous roar, as of a second invisible battle in progress there. Generals and other officers look at each other and hazard conjectures between whiles, the French with exultation, the Prussians gloomily.

HOHENLOHE

That means the Duke of Brunswick, I conceive
 Impacting on the enemy's further force
 Led by, they say, Davout and Bernadotte
 God grant his star less lurid rays than ours,
 Or this too pregnant, hoarsely-groaning day
 Shall, ere its loud delivery be done,
 Have twinned disasters to the fatherland
 That fifty years will fail to sepulchre!

Enter a straggler on horseback.

STRAGGLER

Prince, I have circuted by Auerstadt,
 And bring ye dazzling tidings of the fight,
 Which, if report by those who saw't be true,
 Has rag'd thereat from clammy day-dawn on,
 And left us victors!

HOHENLOHE

Thitherward go I,
 And patch the mischief wrought upon us here!

Enter a second and then a third straggler.

Well, wet-faced men, whence come ye? What d'ye bring?

STRAGGLER II

Your Highness, I rode straight from Hassennausen,
Across the stream of battle as it boiled
Betwixt that village and the banks of Saale,
And such the turmoil that no man could speak
On what the issue was !

HOHENLOHE (to Straggler III)

Can you add aught ?

STRAGGLER III

Nothing that's clear, your Highness

HOHENLOHE

Man, your men

Is that of one who knows, but will not say
Detain him here

STRAGGLER III

The blackness of my news,
Your Highness, darks my sense ! I saw this much
The Duke of Brunswick, spurring on to head
His charging grenadiers, received in the face
A grape-shot stroke that gouged out half of it,
Proclaiming then and there his life fordone

HOHENLOHE

Fallen ? Brunswick ! Reed in council, rock in fire
Ah, this he looked for Many a time of late
Has he, by some strange gift of foreknowing,
Declared his fate was hovering in such wise !

STRAGGLER III

His aged form being borne beyond the strife,
The gallant Moellendorf, in flushed despair,
Swore he would not survive, and, pressing on,
He, too, was slaughtered Patriotic rage
Brimmed marshals' breasts and men's The King himself
Fought like the commonest But nothing served
His horse is slain, his own doom yet unknown
Prince William, too, is wounded Brave Schmettau
Is broke, himself disabled All give way,
And regiments crash like trees at felling-time !

HOHENIOHE

No more We match it here The yielding lines
Still sweep us backward Backward we must go !

[Exeunt HOHLNLOHR Stuff, straggles etc

The Prussian retreat from Jena quickens to a rout, many thousands being taken prisoners by MURAT who pursues them to Weimar where the inhabitants fly shrieking through the streets

The October day closes in to evening By this time the troops retreating with the King of Prussia from the second battlefield of Auerstadt have intersected RUCHELS and HOHENIOHL'S flying battalions from Jena The crossing streams of fugitives strike panic into each other, and the tumult increases with the thickening darkness till night renders the scene invisible and nothing remains but a confused diminishing noise, and fitful lights here and there

The fog of the morning returns and curtains all

SCENE V

BERLIN A ROOM OVERLOOKING A PUBLIC PLACE

A fluttering group of ladies is gathered at the window gazing out and conversing anxiously The time draws towards noon when the clatter of a galloping horse's hoofs is heard echoing up the long Potsdamer-Strasse, and presently turning into the Leipziger Strasse reaches the open space commanded by the ladies' outlook It ceases before a Government building opposite them, and the rider disappears into the courtyard

FIRST LADY

Yes surely he is a courier from the field !

SECOND LADY

Shall we not hasten down, and take from him
The doom his tongue may deal us ?

THIRD LADY

We shall catch
As soon by watching here as hastening hence
The tenour of his news (They wait) Ah, yes see—see
The bulletin is straightway to be nailed !
He was, then, from the field

They wait on while the bulletin is affixed

SECOND LADY

I cannot scan the words the scroll proclaims,
Peer as I will, these too quick-thronging dreads

Bring water to the eyes Grant us, good Heaven
That victory be where she is needed most
To prove Thy goodness ! What do you make of it ?

THIRD LADY (reading, through a glass)

“The battle strains us sorely , but resolve
May save us even now Our last attack
Has failed, with fearful loss Once more we strive’

A long silence in the room Another noise is heard approaching, above the
murmur of the gathering citizens The second lady looks out

SECOND LADY

A straggler merely he But they decide,
At last, to post his news, wild winged or no

THIRD LADY (reading again through her glass)

“The Duke of Brunswick, leading on a charge,
Has met his death-doom Schmettau, too, is slain ,
Prince William wounded But we stand as yet,
Engaging with the last of our reserves ”

The agitation in the street communicates itself to the room Some of the
ladies weep silently as they wait, much longer this time Another horseman
is at length heard clattering into the Platz, and they lean out again with
painful eagerness

SECOND LADY

An adjutant of Marshal Moellendorf's,
If I define him rightly Read—O read !—
Though reading draw them from their socket-holes
Use your eyes now !

THIRD LADY (glass up)

As soon as 'tis affixed
Ah—this means much ! The people's an and gait
Too well betray disaster (Reading) “Berlins, is,
The King has lost the battle ! Bear it well
The foremost duty of a citizen
Is to maintain a brave tranquillity
This is what I, the Governor, demand
Of men and women now The King lives still ”

They turn from the window and sit in a silence broken only by monosyllabic
words, hearing abstractedly the dismay without that has followed the previous
excitement and hope

The stagnation is ended by a cheering outside, of subdued emotional quality mixed with sounds of grief. They again look forth. QUEEN LOUISA is leaving the city with a very small escort, and the populace seem overcome. They strain their eyes after her as she disappears.

Enter fourth lady

FIRST LADY

How does she bear it? Whither does she go?

FOURTH LADY

She goes to join the King at Custuin, there
To abide events—as we. Her heroism
So schools her sense of her calamities
As out of grief to carve new queenliness,
And turn a mobile mien to statuesque,
Save for a sliding tear

The ladies leave the window severally

SPIRIT IRONIC

*So the Will plays at flux and reflux still
This monarchy, one half whose pedestal
Is built of Polish bones, has bones home-made!
Let the fair woman bear it. Poland did*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Meanwhile the mighty Emperor nears apace,
And soon will glitter at the city gates
With palpitating drums, and breathing brass,
And rampant joyful-jingling retinue*

An evening mist cloaks the scene

SCENE VI

THE SAME

It is a brilliant morning with a fresh breeze and not a cloud. The open Platz and the adjoining streets are filled with dense crowds of citizens in whose upturned faces curiosity has mastered consternation and grief.

Martial music is heard, at first faint then louder, followed by a trampling of innumerable horses and a clanking of arms and accoutrements. Through a street on the right hand of the view from the windows come troops of French dragoons heralding the arrival of BONAPARTE.

Re-enter the room hurriedly and cross to the windows several ladies as before, some in tears.

FIRST LADY

The kingdom late of Prussia, can it be
That thus it disappears?—a patriarchy,
A battle, braveiv, ruin, and no more?

SECOND LADY

Thank God the Queen's gone!

THIRD LADY

To what sanctuary?
From earthquake shocks there is no sheltering cell!
—Is this what men call conquest? Must it close
As historical conquests do, or be annulled
By modern reason and the urbane sense?—
Such issue none would venture to predict,
Yet folly 'twere to nourish foreshaped fears
And suffer in conjecture and in deed —
If verily our country be dislimbed,
Then at the mercy of his domination
The face of earth will lie, and vassal kings
Stand waiting on himself the Overking,
Who ruling them rules all, till desperation
Sting and excite a bonded last resistance,
And work its own release

SECOND LADY

He comes even now
From sacrilege I learn that, since the fight,
In marching here by Potsdam yesterday,
Sans-Souci Palace drew his curious feet,
Where even great Frederick's tomb was bared to him

FOURTH LADY

All objects in the Palace—cared for, kept
Even as they were when our arch-monaich died—
The books, the chair, the inkhorn, and the pen
He quizzed with flippant curiosity,
And entering where our hero's bones are ured
He seized the sword and standards treasured there,
And with a mixed effrontery and regard
Declared they should be all dispatched to Paris
As gifts to the Hôtel des Invalides

THIRD LADY

Such rodomontade is cheap what matters it !

A galaxy of marshals forming Napoléon's staff, now enters the Platz immediately before the windows. In the midst rides the EMPEROR himself. The ladies are silent. The procession passes along the front until it reaches the entrance to the Royal Palace. At the door NAPOLÉON descends from his horse and goes into the building amid the resonant trumpeting of his soldiers and the silence of the crowd.

SECOND LADY (impressed)

O why does such a man debase himself
By countenancing loud scurrility
Against a queen who cannot make reprise !
A power so ponderous needs no littleness—
The last resort of feeble desperates !

Enter fifth lady

FIFTH LADY (breathlessly)

Humiliation grows acute still
He placards rhetoric to his soldiery
On their distress of us and our allies,
Declaring he'll not stack away his arms
Till he has choked the remaining foes of France
In their own gainful glut—Whom means he, think you ?

FIRST LADY

Us ?

THIRD LADY

Russia ? Austria ?

FIFTH LADY

Neither England—Yea,
Her he still holds the master mischief-mind,
And mainer of the countries' quietude,
By exercising untold tyranny
Over all ports and seas

SECOND LADY

Then England's doomed !
When he has overturned the Russian rule,
England comes next for wrack. They say that know !

Look—he has entered by the Royal doors
 And makes the Palace his—Now let us go!—
 Our course, alas! is—whither?

[Exeunt ladies

The curtain drops temporarily

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*Deeming himself omnipotent
 With the Kings of the Christian continent,
 To warden the waves was his further bent*

SEMICHORUS II

*But the weaving Will from eternity,
 (Hemming them in by a curling sea)
 Evolved the fleet of the Englishry*

SEMICHORUS I

*The wane of his armaments ill-advised,
 At Trafalgar, to a force despised,
 Was a wound which never has cicatrized*

SEMICHORUS II

*Thus, O this is the clamp that grips!
 And freezes the Emperor's finger tips
 From signing a peace with the Land of Ships*

CHORUS

*The Universal-empire plot
 Demands the rule of that wave-walled spot,
 And peace with England cometh not!*

THE SCENE REOPENS

A lurid gloom now envelops the Platz and city, and Bonaparte is heard as from the Palace

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

These monstrous violations being in train
 Of law and national integrities
 By English arrogance in things marine,
 (Which dares to capture simple merchant-craft,
 In honest quest of harmless merchandize,
 For crime of kinship to a hostile power)

Our vast, effectual, and majestic strokes
 In this unmatched campaign, enable me
 To bar from commerce with the Continent
 All keels of English frame Hence I decree —

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*This outlines his renowned "Berlin Decree"
 Maybe he meditates its scheme in sleep,
 Or hints it to his suite, or syllables it
 While shaping, to his scribes*

VOICE OF NAPOLEON (continuing)

All England's ports to suffer strict blockade,
 All traffic with that land to cease forthwith,
 All natives of her isles, wherever met,
 To be detained as windfalls of the war
 All chattels of her make, material, mould,
 To be good prize wherever pounced upon
 And never a bottom hailing from her shores
 But shall be barred from every haven here
 This for her monstrous harms to human rights,
 And shameless sauciness to neighbour powers !

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I spell herein that our excellently high-coloured drama is now
 played out yet !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nor will it be for many a month of moans,
 And summer shocks, and winter-whitened bones
 The night gets darker, and the Palace outlines are lost.*

SCENE VII

TILSIT AND THE RIVER NIEMEN

The scene is viewed from the windows of BONAPARTE'S temporary quarters
 Some sub-officers of his suite are looking out upon it

It is the day after midsummer, about one o'clock. A multitude of
 soldiery and spectators lines each bank of the broad river which, stealing
 slowly north west, bears almost exactly in its midst a moored raft of bonded
 timber. On this as a floor stands a gorgeous pavilion of draped woodwork,
 having at each side, facing the respective banks of the stream, a round-headed

doorway richly festooned The cumbersome erection acquires from the current a rhythmic movement, as if it were breathing, and the breeze now and then produces a shiver on the face of the stream

DUMB SHOW

On the south west or Prussian side rides the EMPEROR NAPOLEON in uniform attended by the GRAND DUKE OF BRUG, the PRINCE OF NEUCHÂTEL MARSHAL BESSIERES DUROC Marshal of the Palace, and CAULAINCOURT Master of the Horse The EMPEROR looks well but is growing fat They embark on an ornamental barge in front of them, which immediately puts off It is now apparent to the watchers that a precisely similar enactment has simultaneously taken place on the opposite or Russian bank, the chief figure being the EMPEROR ALEXANDER—a graceful, flexible man of thirty, with a courteous manner and good-natured face He has come out from an inn on that side, accompanied by the GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE GENERAL BENNIGSEN, GENERAL OUBAROFF PRINCE LABANOFF and ADJUTANT-GENERAL COUNT LIEVEN

The two barges draw towards the raft, reaching the opposite sides of it about the same time amidst discharges of cannon Each Emperor enters the door that faces him and meeting in the centre of the pavilion they formally embrace each other They retire together to the screened interior, the suite of each remaining in the outer half of the pavilion

More than an hour passes while they are thus invisible The French officers who have observed the scene from the lodging of NAPOLEON walk about idly and ever and anon go curiously to the windows, again to watch the raft

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*The prelude to this smooth scene—mark well!—were the shocks
whereof the times gave token*

*Vaguely to us ere last year's snows shut over Ithuanian pine
and pool,*

*Which we told at the fall of the faded leaf, when the pride of
Prussia was bruised and broken,*

*And the Man of Adventure sat in the seat of the Man of Method
and rigid Rule*

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES

*Snows incarnadined were thine, O Ez'ru, field of the wide white
spaces,*

*And frozen lakes, and frozen limbs, and blood iced hard as it left
the veins*

*Steel-cased squadrons swathed in cloud-drift, plunging to doom
through pathless plains,*

*And forty thousand dead and near dead, strewing the early
mighted plains*

SEMICHORUS II

*Friedland to these adds its tale of victims, its midnight marches
and hot collisions,
Its plunge, at his word, on the enemy hooped by the bended river
and famed Mill stream,
As he shatters the moves of the loose-knit nations to curb his
exploitful soul's ambitions,
And their great Confederacy dissolves like the diorama of a
dream*

DUMB SHOW (continues)

NAPOLEON and ALEXANDER emerge from their seclusion and each is beheld talking to the suite of his companion apparently in fluttering compliment. An effusive parting which signifies itself to be but temporary is followed by their return to the river shores amid the cheers of the spectators.

NAPOLEON and his marshals arrive at the door of his quarters and enter, and pass out of sight to other rooms than that of the foreground in which the observers are loitering. Dumb show ends.

A murmured conversation grows audible, carried on by two persons in the crowd beneath the open windows. Their dress being the native one, and their tongue unfamiliar they seem to the officers to be merely inhabitants gossiping, and their voices continue unheeded.

FIRST ENGLISH SPY¹ (below)

Did you get much for me to send on?

SECOND ENGLISH SPY¹

I have got hold of the substance of their parley. Surely no truce in European annals ever led to so odd an interview. They were like a belle and her beau, by God! But, queerly enough, one of Alexander's staff said to him as he reached the raft "Sire, let me humbly ask you not to forget your father's fate!" Grim—Eh?

FIRST SPY

Anything about the little island which shall be nameless?

SECOND SPY

Much, and startling, too. "Why are we at war?" says Napoléon when they met—"Ah—why!" said t'other—"Well," said Boney, "I am fighting you only as an ally of the English, and you are simply seiving them, and not yourself, in fighting me"—"In that case," says Alexander, "we shall soon be friends, for I owe her as great a grudge as you."

¹ It has been conjectured of late that these adventurous spirits were Sir Robert Wilson and, possibly, Lord Hutchinson, present there at imminent risks of their lives.

FIRST SPY

Dammy go that length, did they !

SECOND SPY

Then they plunged into the old story about English selfishness, and greed, and duplicity But the climax related to Spain, and it amounted to this they agreed that the Bourbons of the Spanish throne should be made to abdicate, and Bonaparte's relations set up as sovereigns instead of them

FIRST SPY

Somebody must hide like hell to let our Cabinet know !

SECOND SPY

I have written it down in cipher, not to trust to memory, and to guard against accidents —They also agreed that France should have the Pope's dominions, Malta, and Egypt, that Napoleon's brother Joseph should have Sicily as well as Naples, and that they would partition the Ottoman Empire between them

FIRST SPY

Cutting up Europe like a plum-pudding Par nobile fiatium !

SECOND SPY

Then the worthy pair came to poor Prussia, whom Alexander, they say, was anxious about, as he is under engagements to her It seems that Napoleon agrees to restore to the King as many of his states as will cover Alexander's promise, so that the Tsar may feel free to strike out in this new line with his new friend

FIRST SPY

Surely this is but surmise ?

SECOND SPY

Not at all One of the suite overheard, and I got round him There was much more, which I did not learn But they are going to soothe and flatter the unfortunate King and Queen by asking them to a banquet here

FIRST SPY

Such a spirited woman will never come !

SECOND SPY

We shall see Whom necessity compels needs must and
she has gone through an Iliad of woes !

FIRST SPY

It is this Spanish business that will stagger England, by God !
And now to let her know it

FRENCH SUBALTERN (looking out above)

What are those townspeople talking about so earnestly, I
wonder ? The lingo of this place has an accent akin to English

SECOND SUBALTERN

No doubt because the races are both Teutonic
The spies observe that they are noticed and disappear in the crowd
The curtain drops

SCENE VIII

THE SAME

The midsummer sun is low, and a long table in the aforeshown apartment
is laid out for a dinner, among the decorations being bunches of the season's
roses

At the vacant end of the room (divided from the dining end by folding
doors, now open) there are discovered the EMPEROR NAPOLÉON, the GRAND
DUKE CONSTANTINE, PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA, the PRINCE ROYAL OF
BAVARIA, the GRAND DUKE OF BERG and attendant officers

Enter the TSAR ALEXANDER NAPOLÉON welcomes him, and the twain
move apart from the rest BONAPARTE placing a chair for his visitor and
flinging himself down on another

NAPOLÉON

The comforts I can offer are not great,
Nor is the accommodation more than scant
That falls to me for hospitality,
But, as it is, accept

ALEXANDER

It serves me well
And to unbrace the bandages of state
Is as clear air to incense-stifled souls
What of the Queen ?

NAPOLÉON

She's coming with the King
We have some quarter-hour to spare or more
Before their Majesties are timed for us

ALEXANDER

Good I would speak of them That she should show
here

After the late events, betokens much !
Abasement in so proud a woman's heart

(His voice grows tremulous)

Is not without a dash of painfulness
And I beseech you, sire, that you hold out
Some soothing hope to her ?

NAPOLÉON

I have, already !—

Now, sire, to those affairs we entered on
Strong friendship, grown secure, bids me repeat
That you have been much duped by your allies

ALEXANDER shows mortification

Prussia's a shuffler, England a self-seeker,
Nobility has shone in you alone
Your error grew of over-generous dreams,
And misbeliefs by dullard ministers
By treating personally we speed affairs
More in an hour than they in blundering months
Between us two, henceforth, must stand no third
There's peril in it, while England's mean ambition
Still works to get us skewered by the ears,
And in this view your chiefs-of-staff concur

ALEXANDER

The judgment of my officers I share

NAPOLÉON

To recapitulate Nothing can greater you
Like this alliance Providence has flung
My good friend Sultan Selim from his throne,
Leaving me free in dealings with the Porte,
And I discern the hour as one to end
A rule that Time no longer lets cohere

If I abstain, its spoils will go to swell
 The power of this same England, our annoy,
 That country which enchains the trade of towns
 With such bold reach as to monopolize,
 Among the rest, the whole of Petersburg's—
 Ay!—through her purse, friend, as the lender there!—
 Shutting that purse, she may incite to—what?
 Muscovy's fall, its ruler's murdering
 Her fleet at any minute can enloop
 Yours in the Baltic, in the Black Sea, too,
 And keep you snug as minnows in a glass!

Hence we, fast-fellowed by our mutual foes,
 Seaward the British, Germany by land,
 And having compassed, for our common good,
 The Turkish Empire's due partitioning,
 As comrades can conjunctly rule the world
 To its own gain and our eternal fame!

ALEXANDER (stirred and flushed)

I see vast prospects opened!—yet, in truth,
 Ere you, sire, broached these themes, their outlines loomed
 Not seldom in my own imaginings,
 But with less clear a vision than endows
 So great a captain, statesman, philosopher,
 As centie in yourself, whom had I known
 Sooner by some few years, months, even weeks,
 I had been spared full many a fault of rule
 —Now as to Austria Should we call her in?

NAPOLÉON

Two in a bed I have slept, but never three

ALEXANDER

Ha-ha! Delightful And, then nextly, Spain?

NAPOLÉON

I lighted on some letters at Berlin,
 Wherein King Carlos offered to attack me
 A Bourbon, minded thus, so near as Spain,
 Is dangerous stuff He must be seen to soon!
 A draft, then, of our treaty being penned,
 We will peruse it later If King George

Will not, upon the terms there offered him,
 Conclude a ready peace, he can be forced
 Trumpet yourself as France's firm ally,
 And Austria will be fain to do the same
 England, left nude to such joint harassment,
 Must shiver—fall

ALEXANDER (with naive enthusiasm)

It is a great alliance !

NAPOLÉON

Would it were one in blood as well as brain—
 Of family hopes, and sweet domestic bliss !

ALEXANDER

Ah—is it to my sister you refer ?

NAPOLÉON

The launching of a liberal progeny
 Has been much pressed upon me, much, of late,
 For reasons which I will not dwell on now
 Staid counsellors, my brother Joseph, too,
 Urge that I loose the Empress by divorce,
 And re-wive promptly for the country's good
 Princesses even have been named for me !—
 However this, to-day, is premature,
 And 'twixt ourselves alone

The Queen of Prussia must ere long be here
 Berthier escorts her And the King, too, comes
 She's one whom you admire ?

ALEXANDER (reddening ingenuously)

Yes Formerly

I had—did feel that some faint fascination
 Vaguely adorned her form And, to be plain,
 Certain reports have been calumnious,
 And wronged an honest woman

NAPOLÉON

As I knew !

But she is wearing thready why, her years
 Must be full one-and-thirty, if she's one

ALEXANDER (quickly)

No, sire She's twenty nine If traits teach more
It means that cruel memory gnaws at her
As fair inciter to that fatal war
Which bore her to the dust ! I do confess
(Since now we speak on't) that this sacrifice
Prussia is doomed to, still disquiets me
Unhappy King ! When I recall the oaths
Sworn him upon great Frederick's sepulchre,
And—and my promises to his sad Queen,
It pricks me that his realm and revenues
Should be stript down to the mere half they were !

NAPOLEON (coolly)

Believe me, 'tis but my regard for you
Which lets me leave him that ! Far easier 'twere
To leave him none at all

[He rises and goes to the window

But here they are

No, it's the Queen alone, with Berthier
As I directed Then the King will follow

ALEXANDER

Let me, sire, urge your courtesy to bestow
Some gentle words on her ?

NAPOLÉON

Ay, ay, I will

Enter QUEEN LOUISA OF PRUSSIA on the arm of BERTHIER She appears
in majestic garments and with a smile on her lips, so that her still great
beauty is impressive But her eyes bear traces of tears She accepts
NAPOLÉON'S attentions with the stormily sad air of a wounded beauty
Whilst she is being received the KING arrives He is a plain, shy honest
faced, awkward man with a wrecked and solitary look His manner to
NAPOLÉON is nevertheless, dignified and even stiff

The company move into the inner half of the room where the tables are,
and the folding doors being shut, they seat themselves at dinner, the QUEEN
taking a place between NAPOLÉON and ALEXANDER

NAPOLÉON

Madame, I love magnificent attire,
But in the present instance can but note
That each bright knot and jewel less adorns
The brighter wearer than the wearer it !

QUEEN (with a sigh)

You praise one, *sire*, whom now the wanton world
Has learnt to cease from praising ! But such words
From such a quarter are of worth no less

NAPOLÉON

Of worth as candour, madame, not as gauge
Your reach in *virtu* outsoars my scope
Yet, do you know, a troop of my hussars,
That last October day, nigh captured you ?

QUEEN

Nay ! Never a single Frenchman did I see

NAPOLÉON

Not less it was that you exposed yourself,
And should have been protected But at Weimar,
Had you but sought me, 'twould have bettered you

QUEEN

I had no zeal to meet you, *sire*, alas !

NAPOLÉON (after a silence)

And how at Memel do you sport with time ?

QUEEN

Sport ? I !—I pore on musty chronicles,
And muse on usurpations long forgot,
And other historied dramas of high wrong !

NAPOLÉON

Why con not annals of your own rich age ?
They treasure acts well fit for pondering

QUEEN

I am reminded too much of my age
By having had to live in it May Heaven
Defend me now, and my wan ghost anon,
From conning it again !

NAPOLÉON

Alas, alas !

Too grievous, this, for one who is yet a queen !

QUEEN

No, I have cause for vials more of grief —

Prussia was blind in blazoning her power

Against the Mage of Earth !

The embers of great Frederick's deeds inflamed her

His glories swelled her to her ruin

Too well has she been punished ! (Emotion stops her)

ALEXANDER (in a low voice, looking anxiously at her)

Say not so

You speak as all were lost Things are not thus !

Such desperation has unreason in it,

And bleeds the hearts that crave to comfort you

NAPOLÉON (to the King)

I trust the treaty, further pondered, sire,

Has consolations ?

KING (curtly)

I am a luckless man,

And mustel strength to bear my lucklessness

Without vain hope of consolations now

One thing, at least, I trust I have shown you, sire

That I provoked not this calamity !

At Anspach first my feud with you began—

Anspach, my Eden, violated and shamed

By blushless trappings of your legions there !

NAPOLÉON

It's rather late, methinks, to talk thus now

KING (with more choler)

Never too late for truth and plainspeaking !

NAPOLÉON (blandly)

To your ally, the Tsar, I must refer you

He was it, and not I, who tempted you

To push for war, when Eylau must have shown
Your every profit to have him in peace —
He can indemnify, yes, much or small, and may

KING (with a head shake)

I would make up, would well make up, my mind
To half my kingdom's loss, could in such limb
But Magdeburg not lie — Dear Magdeburg,
Place of my heart-hold, *that* I would retain !

NAPOLÉON

Our words take not such pattern as is wont
To grace occasions of festivity

[He turns brusquely from the King

The banquet proceeds with a more general conversation When finished a
toast is proposed — The Freedom of the Seas, and drunk with enthusiasm

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Another hit at England and her tubs !
I hear harsh echoes from her chalky chimes*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*O heed not England now ! Still read the Queen
One grieves to see her spend her pretty spills
Upon the man who has so injured her*

They rise from table and the folding doors being opened they pass into
the adjoining part of the room

Here are now assembled MURAT, TALLEYRAND, KOURAKIN, KAIKALUTH,
BERTHIER, BESSIERES, CAULAINCOURT, LABANOFF, BLANNIGSEN and
others. NAPOLEON having spoken a few words here and there resumes his
conversation with QUEEN LOUISA and parenthetically offers snuff to the
COUNTESS VOSS. Her lady in waiting, TALLEYRAND who has observed
NAPOLEON'S growing interest in the QUEEN, contrives to get near him

TALLEYRAND (in a whisper)

Sire, is it possible that you can bend
To let one woman's fairness filch from you
All the resplendent fortune that attends
The grandest victory of your grand career ?

The QUEEN'S quick eye observes and flashes at the whisper, and she
obtains a word with the minister

QUEEN (sarcastically)

I should infer, dear Monsieur Talleyrand,
Only two persons in the world regret
My having come to Tilsit

TALLEYRAND

Madame, two?
Can any!—who may such sad rascals be?

QUEEN

You, and myself, Prince (Gravely) Yes! myself and you
TALLEYRAND'S face becomes impassive and he does not reply
Soon the QUEEN prepares to leave, and NAPOLÉON rejoins her

NAPOLÉON (taking a rose from a vase)

Dear Queen, do pray accept this little token
As souvenir of me before you go?

He offers her the rose, with his hand on his heart She hesitates but
accepts it

QUEEN (impulsively, with waiting tears)

Let Magdeburg come with it, sire! O yes!

NAPOLÉON (with sudden fluidity)

It is for you to take what I can give
And I give this—no more¹

She turns her head to hide her emotion and withdraws NAPOLÉON
steps up to her, and offers his arm She takes it silently, and he perceives
the tears on her cheeks They cross towards the ante room, away from the
other guests

NAPOLÉON (softly)

Still weeping, dearest lady! Why is this?

QUEEN (seizing his hand and pressing it)

Your speeches dain the tearings of your sword!—
Between us two, as man and woman now,
Is't even possible you question why!

¹ The traditional present of the rose was probably on this occasion, though it is not quite matter of certainty

O why did not the Greatest of the Age—
Of future ages—of the ages past,
This one time win a woman's worship—yea,
For all her little life !

NAPOLÉON (gravely)

Know you, my Fair
That I—ay, I—in this deserve your pity —
Some force within me, baffling mine intent,
Harries me onward, whether I will or no
My star, my star is what's to blame—not I
It is unswervable !

QUEEN

Then now, alas !
My duty's done as mother, wife, and queen —
I'll say no more—but that my heart is broken !

[Exit Napoléon, Queen, and Lady in Waiting]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He spoke thus at the Bridge of Lodi Strange,
He's of the few in Europe who discern
The working of the Will*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*If that be so,
Better for Europe lacked he such discerning !*

NAPOLÉON returns to the room and joins Talleyrand

NAPOLÉON (aside to his minister)

My God, it was touch-and go that time, Talleyrand ! She
was within an ace of getting over me As she stepped into the
carriage she said in her pretty way, "O I have been cruelly
deceived by you !" And when she sank down inside, not
knowing I heard, she burst into sobs fit to move a statue The
Devil take me if I hadn't a good mind to stop the horses, jump
in, give her a good kissing, and agree to all she wanted Ha-ha,
well, a miss is as good as a mile Had she come sooner with
those sweet, beseeching blue eyes of hers, who knows what
might not have happened ! But she didn't come sooner, and I
have kept in my right mind

The RUSSIAN EMPEROR the KING OF PRUSSIA, and other guests advance to bid adieu They depart severally When they are gone NAPOLÉON turns to TALLEYRAND

Adhere, then, to the treaty as it stands
Change not therein a single article,
But write it fair forthwith

[Exit NAPOLÉON, TALLEYRAND, and other ministers and officers in waiting

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Some surly voice afar I heard by now
Of an emsied Britannic quality,
Wots any of the cause ?*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Perchance I do !
Britain is roused, in her slow stolid style,
By Bonaparte's pronouncement at Berlin
Against her cargoes, commerce, life itself,
And now from out her watery citadel
Blows counterblasting "Orders" Rumourers, tell*

RUMOUR I

*"From havens of fierce France and her allies,
With poor or precious freight of merchandise
Whoso adventures, England pounds as prize !"*

RUMOUR II

*Thereat Napoleon names her, furiously,
Curs'd Oligarch, Arch-pirate of the sea,
Who shall lack room to live while liveth he !*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

And peoples are enmeshed in new calamity ?

Curtain of Evening Shades

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

THE PYRENEES AND VALLEYS ADJOINING

The view is from upper air, immediately over the region that lies between Bayonne on the north, Pampeluna on the south, and San Sebastian on the west including a portion of the Cantabrian mountains. The month is February and snow covers not only the peaks but the lower slopes. The roads over the passes are well beaten.

DUMB SHOW

At various elevations multitudes of NAPOLEON'S soldiers, to the number of about thirty thousand, are discerned in a creeping progress across the frontier from the French to the Spanish side. The thin long columns serpentine along the roads but are sometimes broken while at others they disappear altogether behind vertical rocks and overhanging woods. The heavy guns and the whitey-brown tilts of the baggage waggons seem the largest objects in the procession which are dragged laboriously up the incline to the watershed, their lumbering being audible as high as the clouds.

Simultaneously the river Bidassoa, in a valley to the west is being crossed by a train of artillery and another thirty thousand men, all forming part of the same systematic advance.

Along the great highway through Biscay the wondering native carters draw their sheep skinned ox teams aside to let the regiments pass, and stray groups of perceable field workers in Navarre look inquiringly at the marching and prancing progress.

Time passes, and the various northern strongholds are approached by these legions. Their governors emerge at a summons, and when seeming explanations have been given the unwelcome comers are doubtfully admitted.

The chief places to which entrance is thus obtained are Pampeluna and San Sebastian at the front of the scene, and far away towards the shining horizon of the Mediterranean, Figueras and Barcelona.

Dumb Show concludes as the mountain mists close over.

SCENE II

ARANJUEZ, NEAR MADRID. A ROOM IN THE PALACE
OF GODOY, THE "PRINCE OF PEACE"

A private chamber is disclosed richly furnished with paintings, vases, mirrors, silk hangings, gilded lounges, and several lutes of rare workmanship. The hour is midnight, the room being lit by screened candelabra. In the centre at the back of the scene is a large window heavily curtained.

GODOY and the QUEEN MARIA LUISA are dallying on a sofa. THE PRINCE OF PEACE is a fine handsome man in middle life, with curled hair and a mien of easy good nature. The QUEEN is older but looks younger in the dim light from the lavish use of beautifying arts. She has pronounced features, dark eyes, low brows, black hair bound by a jewelled banderol, and brought forward in curls over her forehead and temples, long heavy ear-rings, an open bodice, and sleeves puffed at the shoulders. A cloak and other mufflers lie on a chair beside her.

GODOY (after a silence)

The life-guards still insist, Love, that the King
Shall not leave Aranjuez

QUEEN

Let them insist
Whether we stay, or whether we depart,
Napoléon soon draws hither with his host !

GODOY

He says he comes pacifically But no !

QUEEN

Dearest, we must away to Andalusia,
Thence to America when time shall serve

GODOY

I hold seven thousand men to cover us,
And ships in Cadiz port. But then—the Prince
Flatly declines to go. He lauds the French
As true deliverers

QUEEN

Go Fernando *must* !

O my sweet friend, that we—our sole two selves—
Could but escape and leave the rest to fate,
And in a western bower dream out our days !—
For the King's glass can run but briefly now,
Shattered and shaken as his vigour is —
But ah—your love burns not in singleness !
Why, dear, caress Josefa Tudo still ?
She does not solve her soul in yours as I
And why those others even more than he ? .
How little own I in thee !

GODOY

Such must be
I cannot quite forsake them Don't forget
The same scope has been yours in former years

QUEEN

Yes, Love, I know I yield ! You cannot leave them,
But if you ever would bethink yourself
How long I have been yours, how truly all
Those other pleasures were my desperate shifts
To soften sorrow at your absences,
You would be faithful to me !

GODOY

True, my dear —
Yet I do passably keep troth with you,
And fond you with fair regularity —
A week beside you, and a week away
Such is not schemed without some risk and strain —
And you agreed Josefa should be mine,
And, too, Thereza, without jealousy !

(A noise is heard within)

Ah, what means that ?

He jumps up from her side and crosses the room to a window where he
lifts the curtain cautiously The Queen follows him with a scared look

QUEEN

A riot can it be ?

GODOY

Let me put these out ere they notice them,
They think me at the Royal Palace yonder

He hastily extinguishes the candles except one taper which he places in a
recess so that the room is in shade He then draws back the curtains and
she joins him at the window, where, enclosing her with his arm, he and she
look out together

In front of the house a guard of hussars is stationed beyond them spread
ing the Plaza or Square On the other side rises in the lamplight the white
front of the Royal Palace On the flank of the Palace is a wall enclosing
gardens, bowered alleys and orange groves and in the wall a small
door

A mixed multitude of soldiery and populace fills the space in front of the
King's Palace, and they shout and address each other vehemently During
a lull in their vociferations is heard the peaceful pull of the rig over a
cascade in the Palace grounds

QUEEN

Lingeriug, we've risked too long our chance of flight !
 The Paris Terror will repeat it here
 Not for myself I fear No, no, for thee !
 (She clings to him)
 If they should hurt you, it would murder me
 By heart-bleedings and stabs intolerable !

GODOY (kissing her)

The first thought now is how to get you back
 Within the Palace walls Why would you risk
 To come here on a night so critical ?

QUEEN (passionately)

I could not help it—nay, I *would* not help !
 Rather than starve my soul I venture all —
 Our last love night—last, maybe, of long years
 Why do you chide me now ?

GODOY

Dear Queen, I do not
 I shape these sharp regrets but for your sake
 Hence you must go, somehow, and quickly too
 They think not yet of you in threatening thus,
 But of me solely Where does your lady wait ?

QUEEN

Below One servant with her They are true,
 And can be let know all But you—but you !
 (Uproar continues)

GODOY

I can escape Now call them All three cloak
 And veil as when you came

They retreat into the room QUEEN MARIA LUISA s lady-in-waiting and
 servant are summoned Enter both All three then muffle themselves up,
 and GODOY prepares to conduct the QUEEN downstairs

QUEEN

Nay, now ! I will not have it We are safe,
 Think of yourself Can you get out behind ?

GODOY

I judge so—when I have done what's needful here —
The mob knows not the bye-doo!—slip across ,
Thence around sideways —All's clear there as yet
[The QUEEN, her lady-in waiting, and the servant go out hurriedly

GODOY looks again from the window The mob is some way off the immediate front being for the moment nearly free of loiterers and the three muffled figures are visible, crossing without hindrance towards the door in the wall of the Palace Gardens The instant they reach it a sentinel springs up, challenging them

GODOY

Ah—now they are doomed ! My God, why did she come !

A parley takes place Something, apparently a bribe, is handed to the sentinel, and the three are allowed to slip in, the QUEEN having obviously been unrecognized He breathes his relief

Now for the others Then—ah, then Heaven knows !

He sounds a bell and a servant enters

Where is the Countess of Castilliofel ?

SERVANT

She's looking for you, Prince

GODOY •

Find her at once

Ah—here she is —That's well —Go watch the Plaza
(to servant)

GODOY'S mistress the DOÑA JOSEFA TUDO, enters She is a young and beautiful woman the vivacity of whose large dark eyes is now clouded She is wrapped up for flight The servant goes out

JOSEFA (breathlessly)

I should have joined you sooner, but I knew
The Queen was fondling with you She must needs
Come hampering you this night of all the rest,
As if not goiged with you at other times !

GODOY

Don't, pretty one ! needless it is in you,
Being so well aware who holds my love —
I could not check her coming, since she would •
You will know how the old thing is, and how
I am compelled to let her have her mind !

He kisses her repeatedly

JOSEFA

But look, the mob is swelling ! Pouring in
By thousands from Madrid—and all afoot
Will they not come on hither from the King's ?

GODOY

Not just yet, maybe You should have sooner fled !
The coach is waiting and the baggage packed

(He again peers out)

Yes, there the coach is , and the clamours near,
Led by Montijo, if I see aright
Yes, they cry " Uncle Peter ! "—that means him
There will be time yet Now I'll take you down
So far as I may venture

[They leave the room

In a few minutes GODOY, having taken her down re-enters and again looks out JOSEFA'S coach is moving off with a small escort of GODOY'S guards of honour A sudden yelling begins, and the crowd rushes up and stops the vehicle An altercation ensues

CROWD

Uncle Peter, it is the Favourite carrying off Prince Fernando
Stop him !

JOSEFA (putting her head out of the coach)

Silence their uproar, please, Señor Count of Montijo ! It is
a lady only, the Countess of Castilofiel

MONTIJO

Let her pass, let her pass, friends ! It is only that pretty
wench of his, Pepa Tudo, who calls herself a Countess Our
titles are put to comical uses in these days We shall catch the
cock bird presently !

CROWD (to each other)

The King and Queen and Fernando are at their own Palace—
not here !

The DOÑA JOSEFA'S carriage is allowed to pass on, as a shout from some
who have remained before the Royal Palace attracts the attention of the
multitude, which surges back thither

CROWD (nearing the Palace)

Call out the King and the Prince Long live the King ! He shall not go Hola ! He is gone ! Let us see him ! He shall abandon Godoy !

The clamour before the Royal Palace still increasing a figure emerges upon a balcony, whom GODOY recognizes by the lamplight to be FERNANDO, Prince of Asturias He can be seen waving his hand The mob grows suddenly silent

FERNANDO (in a shaken voice)

Citizens ! the King my father is in the palace with the Queen He has been much tried to day

CROWD

Promise, Prince, that he shall not leave us Promise !

FERNANDO

I do I promise in his name He has mistaken you, thinking you wanted his head He knows better now

CROWD

The villain Godoy misrepresented us to him ! Throw out the Prince of Peace !

FERNANDO

He is not here, my friends

CROWD

Then the King shall announce to us that he has dismissed him ! Let us see him The King, the King !

FERNANDO goes in KING CARLOS comes out reluctantly, and bows to their cheering He produces a paper with a trembling hand

KING (reading)

"As it is the wish of the people——"

CROWD

Speak up, your Majesty !

KING (more loudly)

"As it is the wish of the people, I release Don Manuel Godoy, Prince of Peace, from the posts of Generalissimo of the Army and Grand Admiral of the Fleet, and give him leave to withdraw whither he pleases"

CROWD

Huzza !

KING

Citizens, to-morrow the decree is to be posted in Madrid

CROWD

Huzza ! Long life to the King, and death to Godoy !

KING CARLOS disappears from the balcony and the populace still increasing in numbers, look towards GODOY'S mansion as if deliberating how to attack it. GODOY retreats from the window into the room, and glancing round him starts. A pale worn, but placid lady in a sombre though elegant robe, stands here in the gloom. She is *THE REVENUE OF BOURBON* the Princess of Peace

PRINCESS

It is only your unhappy wife, Manuel. She will not hurt you !

GODOY (shrugging his shoulders)

Not will *they* hurt *you* ! Why did you not stay in the Royal Palace ? You would have been more comfortable there

PRINCESS

I don't recognize why you should specially value my comfort. You have saved your real wives. How can it matter what happens to your titular one ?

GODOY

Much, dear. I always play fair. But it being your blest privilege not to need my saving I was left free to practise it on those who did. (Mob heard approaching) Would that I were in no more danger than you !

PRINCESS

Puf !

He again peers out. His guard of hussars stands firmly in front of the mansion, but the life-guards from the adjoining barracks who have joined the people, endeavour to break the hussars of GODOY. A shot is fired, Godoy's guard yields, and the gate and door are battered in.

CROWD (without)

Murder him ! murder him ! Death to Manuel Godoy !

They are heard rushing into the court and house

PRINCESS

Go, I beseech you! You can do nothing for me, and I pray you to save yourself! The heap of mats in the lumber-room will hide you!

GODOY hastes to a jib-door concealed by sham book shelves presses the spring of it, returns, kisses her, and then slips out

His wife sits down with her back against the jib-door and fans herself. She hears the crowd trampling up the stairs but she does not move, and in a moment people burst in. The leaders are armed with stakes, diggers and various improvised weapons and some guards in undress appear with halberds.

FIRST CITIZEN (peering into the dim light)

Where is he? Murder him! (Noticing the Princess) Come, where is he?

PRINCESS

The Prince of Peace is gone I know not whither

SECOND CITIZEN

Who is this lady?

LIFE-GUARDSMAN

Manuel Godoy's Princess

CITIZENS (uncovering)

Princess, a thousand pardons grant us!—you
An injured wife—an injured people we!
Common misfortune makes us more than kin
No single hair of yours shall suffer harm

The PRINCESS bows

FIRST CITIZEN

But this, Señora, is no place for you,
For we mean mischief here! Yet first will cede
Safe conduct for you to the Palace gates,
Or elsewhere, as you wish

PRINCESS

My wish is nought
Do what you will with me But he's not here

Several of them form an escort and accompany her from the room and out of the house. Those remaining now a great throng, begin searching the room, and in bands invade other parts of the mansion

SOME CITIZENS (returning)

It is no use searching She said he was not here, and she's a woman of honour

FIRST CITIZEN (dully)

She's his wife

They leave the room for another search, but return still baffled

SEVERAL CITIZENS

He must have slipped out somehow ! Smash his nicknacks, since we can't smash him

They begin knocking the furniture to pieces, tearing down the hangings, trampling on the musical instruments, and kicking holes through the paintings they have unhung from the walls These with clocks, vases, carvings and other movables, they throw out of the window, till the chamber is a scene of utter wreck and desolation In the rout a musical box is swept off a table, and starts playing a serenade as it falls on the floor

Enter the COUNT OF MONTIJO

MONTIJO

Stop, friends, stop this ! There is no sense in it—
It shows but useless spite ! I have much to say
The French Ambassador, de Beauharnais,
Has come, and sought the King And next Murat,
With thirty thousand men, half cavalry,
Is closing in upon our doomed Madrid !
I know not what he means, this Bonaparte,
He makes pretence to gain us Portugal,
But what want we with her ? 'Tis like as not
His aim's to noose us vassals all to him !
The King will abdicate, and shortly too,
As those will live to see who live not long —
We have saved our nation from the Favourite,
But who is going to save us from our Friend ?

The mob desists dubiously and goes out, the musical box upon the floor plays on, the taper burns to its socket, and the room becomes wrapt in the shades of night

SCENE III

LONDON THE MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY'S

A large reception-room is disclosed, arranged for a conversazione It is an evening in the summer following, and at present the chamber is empty and

in gloom At one end is an elaborate device, representing Britannia offering her assistance to Spain, and at the other a figure of Time crowning the Spanish Patriots' flag with laurel

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*O clarionists of human welterings,
Relate how Europe's madd'ning movement brings
This easeful haunt into the path of palpitating things !*

RUMOURS (chanting)

I

*The Spanish King has bowed unto the Fate
Which bade him abdicate
The sensual Queen, whose passionate caprice
Has held her chambering with "the Prince of Peace,"
And wrought the Bourbons' fall,
Holds to her Love in all,
And Bonaparte has ruled that his and he
Henceforth displace the Bourbon dynasty*

II

*The Spanish people, handled in such sort,
As chattels of a Court,
Dream dreams of England Messengers are sent
In secret to the assembled Parliament,
In faith that England's hand
Will stouten them to stand,
And crown a cause which, hold they, bond and free
Must advocate enthusiastically*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*So the Will heaves through Space, and moulds the times,
With mortals for Its fingers ! We shall see
Again men's passions, virtues, visions, crimes,
Obey resistlessly
The mutative, unmotived, dominant Thing
Which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring !*

The reception-room is lighted up, and the hostess comes in There arrive Ambassadors and their wives, the Dukes and Duchesses of RUTLAND and SOMERSET the Marquis and Marchioness of STAFFORD the Earls of STAIR, WESTMORELAND, GOWER, ESSEX, Viscounts and Viscountesses CRANLEY and MORPETH, Viscount MELBOURNE, Lord and Lady KINNAIRD, Baron de ROLLE, Lady CHARLES GREVILLE, the Ladies CAVENDISH, M^r and Mrs

THOMAS HOPE, Mr GUNNING, Mrs FITZHERBERT, and many other notable personages. Lastly, she goes to the door to welcome severally the PRINCE OF WALES, the PRINCES OF FRANCE, and the PRINCESS CASTELCICALA.

LADY SALISBURY (to the Prince of Wales)

I am sorry to say, sir, that the Spanish Patriots are not yet arrived. I doubt not but that they have been delayed by their ignorance of the town, and will soon be here.

PRINCE OF WALES

No hurry whatever, my dear hostess. Gad, we've enough to talk about! I understand that the arrangement between our ministers and these noblemen will include the liberation of Spanish prisoners in this country, and the providing 'em with arms, to go back and fight for their independence.

LADY SALISBURY

It will be a blessed event if they do check the career of this infamous Corsican. I have just heard that that poor foreigner Guillet de la Gevrillière, who proposed to Mr Fox to assassinate him, died a miserable death a few days ago in the Bicêtre—probably by torture, though nobody knows. Really one almost wishes Mr Fox had—— O here they are!

Enter the Spanish Viscount de MATEROSA and DON DIEGO de la VEGA. They are introduced by CAPTAIN HILL and Mr BAGOT, who escort them. LADY SALISBURY presents them to the PRINCE and others.

PRINCE OF WALES

By Gad, Viscount, we were just talking of 'ee. You have had some adventures in getting to this country?

MATEROSA (assisted by Bagot as interpreter)

Sir, it has indeed been a trying experience for us. But here we are, impressed by a deep sense of gratitude for the signal marks of attachment your country shows us.

PRINCE OF WALES

You represent, practically, the Spanish people?

MATEROSA

We are immediately deputed, sir,
By the Assembly of Asturias,
More sailing soon from other provinces.

We bring official writings, charging us
To clinch and solder Treaties with this realm
That may promote our cause against the foe
Nextly a letter to your gracious King,
Also a Proclamation, soon to sound
And swell the pulse of the Peninsula,
Declaring that the act by which King Carlos
And his son Prince Fernando cede the throne
To whomsoever Napoleon may appoint,
Being an act of cheaterly, not of choice,
Unfetter us from our allegiant oath

MRS FITZHERBERT

The usurpation began, I suppose, with the divisions in the Royal Family?

MATEROSA

Yes, madam, and the protection they foolishly requested from the Emperor, and then timid intent of fiving secretly helped it on. It was an opportunity he had been awaiting for years

MRS FITZHERBERT

All brought about by this man Godov, Prince of Peace?

PRINCE OF WALES

Dash my wig, mighty much you know about it, Maria! Why, sure, Boney thought to himself, "This Spain is a pretty place, 'twill just suit me as an extra acie or two, so here goes"

DON DIFGO (aside to Bagot)

This lady is the Princess of Wales?

BAGOT

Hsh! no, Señor. The Princess lives at large at Kensington and other places, and has parties of her own, and doesn't keep house with her husband. This lady is—well, really his wife, you know, in the opinion of many, but——

DON DIEGO

Ah! Ladies a little mixed, as they were at our Court! She's the Pepa Tudo to *this* Prince of Peace?

H

BAGOT

O no—not exactly that, Señor

DON DIEGO

Ya, ya Good I'll be careful, my friend You are not saints in England more than we are in Spain !

BAGOT

We are not Only you sin with naked faces, and we with masks on

DON DIEGO

Virtuous country !

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND

It was understood that Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, was to marry a French princess, and so unite the countries peacefully ?

MATEROSA

It was And our credulous prince was tempted to meet Napoleon at Bayonne Also the poor simple King, and the infatuated Queen, and Manuel Godoy

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND

Then Godoy escaped from Aranjuez ?

MATEROSA

Yes, by hiding in the garret Then they all threw themselves upon Napoleon's protection In his presence the Queen swore that the King was not Fernando's father ! Altogether they form a queer little menagerie What will happen to them nobody knows

PRINCE OF WALES

And do you wish us to send an army at once ?

MATEROSA

What we most want, sir, are arms and ammunition But we leave the English Ministry to co-operate in its own wise way, anyhow, so as to sustain us in resenting these insults from the Tyrant of the Earth

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND (to the Prince of Wales)

What sort of aid shall we send, sir ?

PRINCE OF WALES

We are going to vote fifty millions, I hear Well whack him, and preserve your noble country for 'ee, Señor Viscount The debate thereon is to come off to-morrow It will be the finest thing the Commons have had since Pitt's time Sheridan, who is to open it, says he and Canning are to be absolutely unanimous, and, by God, like the parties in his "Critic," when Government and Opposition do agree, their unanimity is wonderful Viscount Materosa, you and your friends must be in the Gallery O dammy, you must!

MATEROSA

Sir, we are already pledged to be there

PRINCE OF WALES

And hark ye, Señor Viscount You will then learn what a mighty fine thing a debate in the English Parliament is! No Continental humbug there Not but that the Court has a trouble to keep 'em in their places sometimes, and I would it had been one in the Lords instead However, Sheridan says he has been learning his speech these two days, and has hunted his father's dictionary through for some stunning long words—Now, Maria (to Miss Fitzherbert), I am going home

LADY SALISBURY

At last, then, England will take her place in the forefront of this mortal struggle, and in pure disinterestedness fight with all her strength for the European deliverance God defend the right!

The Prince of Wales leaves and the other guests begin to depart

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Leave this glib throng to its conjecturing,
And let four burdened weeks unmover what they bring!*

SEMICHORUS II

*The said Debate, to wit, its close in deeds,
Till England stands enlisted for the Patriots' needs*

SEMICHORUS I

*And transports in the docks gulp down their freight
Of buckled fighting-flesh, and, gale bound, watch and wait*

SEMICHORUS II

*Till gracious zephyrs shoulder on their souls
To where the brine of Biscay moans its tragic tales*

CHORUS

*Bear we, too, south, as we were swallow-vanned,
And mark the game now played there by the Master-hand!*

The reception chamber is shut over by the night without, and the point of view rapidly recedes south, London and its streets and lights diminishing till they are lost in the distance and its noises being succeeded by the babble of the Channel and Biscay waves

SCENE IV

MADRID AND ITS ENVIRONS

The view is from the housetops of the city on a dusty evening in this July, following a day of suffocating heat. The sunburnt roofs wum ochreous walls and blue shadows of the capital, wear their usual aspect except for a few feeble attempts at decoration

DUMB SHOW

Gazers gather in the central streets, and particularly in the Puerta del Sol. They show curiosity but no enthusiasm. Patrols of French soldiery move up and down in front of the people and seem to awe them into quietude.

There is a discharge of artillery in the outskirts and the church bells begin ringing, but the peals dwindle away to a melancholy jangle, and then to silence. Simultaneously on the northern horizon of the arid unenclosed and treeless plain swept by the eye around the city a cloud of dust arises and a Royal procession is seen nearing. It means the new king, JOSEPH BONAPARTE.

He comes on, escorted by a clanking guard of four thousand Italian troops and the brilliant royal carriage is followed by a hundred coaches bearing his suite. As the procession enters the city many houses reverse themselves to be closed many citizens leave the route and walk elsewhere, while many of those who remain turn their backs upon the spectacle.

KING JOSEPH proceeds thus through the Plaza Oriente to the granite-walled Royal Palace where he alights and is received by some of the nobility the French generals who are in occupation there and some clergy. Heralds emerge from the Palace, and hasten to divers points in the city, where trumpets are blown and the Proclamation of JOSEPH as KING OF SPAIN is read in a loud voice. It is received in silence.

The sun sets and the curtain falls.

SCENE V

THE OPEN SEA BETWEEN THE ENGLISH COASTS
AND THE SPANISH PENINSULA

From high aloft in the same July weather and facing east the vision swoops over the ocean and its coast-lines from Cork Harbour on the extreme left to Mondego Bay Portugal, on the extreme right Land's End and the Scilly Isles Ushant and Cape Finisterre are projecting features along the middle distance of the picture, and the English Channel recedes endwise as a tapering avenue near the centre

DUMB SHOW

Four groups of moth like transport ships are discovered silently skimming this wide liquid plain The first group to the right is just vanishing behind Cape Mondego to enter Mondego Bay, the second in the midst, has come out from Plymouth Sound, and is preparing to strand down Channel, the third is clearing St Helen's point for the same course, and the fourth, much further up Channel, is obviously to follow on considerably in the rear of the two preceding A south east wind is blowing strong, and, according to the part of their course reached, they either sail direct with the wind on their larboard quarter, or labour forward by tacking in zigzags

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*What are these fleets that cross the sea
From British ports and bays
To coasts that glister southwardly
Behind the dog-day haze?*

RUMOURS (chanting)

SEMICHORUS I

*They are the shipped battalions sent
To bar the bold Belligerent
Who stalks the Dancers' Land
Within these hulls, like sheep a-pen,
Are packed in thousands fighting-men
And colonels in command*

SEMICHORUS II

*The fleet that leans each airy fin
Far south, where Mondego mouths in,
Bears Wellesley and his aides therein,
And Hill, and Crauford too,*

*With Torrens, Ferguson, and Fane,
And majors, captains, clerks, in train,
And those grim needs that appertain—
The surgeons—not a few '
To them add near twelve thousand souls
In linesmen that the list enrolls,
Borne onward by those sheeted poles
As war's red retinue '*

SEMICHORUS I

*The fleet that clears St Helen's shore
Holds Burrard, Hope, ill-omened Moore,
Clinton and Paget, while
The transports that pertain to those
Count six-score sail, whose planks enclose
Ten thousand rank and file*

SEMICHORUS II

*The third-sent ships, from Plymouth Sound,
With Acland, Anstruther, impound
Souls to six thousand strong
While those, the fourth fleet, that we see
Far back, are lined with cavalry,
And guns of girth, wheeled heavily
To roll the routes along*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Enough, and more, of inventories and names '
Many will fail, many earn doubtful fames
Await the fruitage of their acts and aims*

DUMB SHOW (continuing)

In the spacious scene visible the far-separated groups of transports conveyed by battleships, float on before the wind almost imperceptibly, like preened duck-feathers across a pond. The southernmost expedition, under SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, soon comes to anchor within the Bay of Mondego aforesaid and the soldiery are indefinitely discernible landing upon the beach from boats. Simultaneously the division commanded by MOORE as yet in the Chops of the Channel, is seen to be beaten back by contrary winds. It gallantly puts to sea again, and being joined by the division under ANSTRUTHER that has set out from Plymouth, labours round Ushant and

stands to the south in the track of WESTWIND. The rearward transports do the same.

A moving statum of summer cloud beneath the point of view covers up the spectacle like an awning.

SCENE VI

ST CLOUD THE BOUDOIR OF JOSEPHINE

It is the dusk of an evening in the latter summer of this year and from the windows at the back of the stage which are still uncurtained, can be seen the EMPRESS with NAPOLEON and some ladies and officers of the Court playing Catch-me-if-you-can by torchlight on the lawn. The moving torches throw bizarre lights and shadows into the apartment where only a remote cradle or two are burning.

Enter JOSEPHINE and NAPOLEON together somewhat out of breath. With careless suppleness she slides down on a couch and fans herself. Now that the candle rays reach her they show her mellow complexion her society eyes with long lashes mouth with pointed corners and excessive mobility beneath its *duvet* and curls of dark hair pressed down upon the temples by a gold band.

The EMPEROR drops into a seat near her and they remain in silence till he jumps up knocks over some nicknacks with his elbow and begins walking about the boudoir.

NAPOLEON (with sudden gloom)

These mindless games are very well, my friend
But ours to-night marks, not improbably,
The last we play together.

JOSEPHINE (starting)

Can you say it!
Why raise that ghastly nightmare on me now,
When, for a moment, my poor brain had dreams
Denied it all the earlier anxious day?

NAPOLEON

Things that verge nigh, my simple Joséphine
Are not shoved off by wilful winking-at
Better quiz evils with too strained an eye
Than have them leap from disregarded lairs.

JOSEPHINE

Maybe 'tis true, and you shall have it so!—
Yet all joy is but sorrow waived awhile.

NAPOLÉON

Ha, ha ! That's like you Well, each day by day
 I get soui news Each hour since we returned
 From this queer Spanish business at Bayonne,
 I have had nothing else , and hence my brooding

JOSEPHINE

But all went well throughout our touring-time ?

NAPOLÉON

Not so—behind the scenes Oui aims at Baylen
 Have been smouched badly Twenty thousand shamed
 All through Dupont's ill-luck ! The selfsame day
 My brother Joseph's progress to Madrid
 Was glorious as a sodden rocket's fizz !
 Since when his letters creak with querulousness
 "Napoleon el chico" 'tis they call him—
 "Napoleon the Little," so he says
 Then notice Austria Much looks louring there,
 And her sly new regard for England grows
 The English, next, have shipped an army down
 To Mondego, under one Wellesley,
 A man from India, and his march is south
 To Lisbon, by Vimeiro On he'll go
 And do the devil's mischief ere he is met
 By unware Junot, and cheyved back
 To English fogs and fumes !

JOSEPHINE

My dearest one,
 You have mused on worse reports with better grace
 Full many and many a time Ah—there is more ! . .
 I know , I know !

NAPOLÉON (kicking away a stool)

There is, of course , that worm
 Time ever keeps in hand for gnawing me !—
 The question of my dynasty—which bites
 Closer and closer as the years wheel on

JOSÉPHINE

Of course it's that ! For nothing else could hang
 My lord on tenterhooks through nights and days,—
 O! rather, not the question, but the tongues
 That keep the question stirring Nought recked you
 Of throne-succession or dynastic lines
 When gloriously engaged in Italy !
 I was your fairy then they labelled me
 Your Lady of Victories, and much I loved,
 Till dangerous ones drew near and daily sowed
 These choking tares within your fecund brain,—
 Making me tremble if a panel creak,
 O! mouse but cheep, or silent leaf sail down,
 And murdering my melodious hours with dreads
 That my late happiness, and my late hope,
 Will oversoon be knelled !

NAPOLÉON (genially, nearing her)

But years have passed since first we talked of it,
 And now, with loss of dear Hortense's son
 Who won me as my own, it looms forth more
 And selfish 'tis in my good Josephine
 To blind her vision to the weal of France,
 And this great Empire's solidity
 The grandeur of your sacrifice would gild
 Your life's whole shape

JOSEPHINE

Were I as coarse a wife
 As I am limned in English caricature—
 (Those cruel effigies they draw of me !)—
 You could not speak more audly

NAPOLÉON

Nav, nay !
 You know, my comrade, how I love you still
 Were there a long-notorious dislike
 Between us, reason might be in your dreads
 But all earth knows our conjugality
 There's not a bourgeois couple in the land
 Who, should due duty rule their severance,
 Could part with scander scandal than could we

JOSÉPHINE (pouting)

Nevertheless there's one

NAPOLÉON

A scandal ? What ?

JOSÉPHINE

Madame Walewska ! How could you pretend
When, after Jena, I'd have come to you,
"The weather was so wild, the roads so rough,
That no one of my sex and delicate nerve
Could hope to face the dangers and fatigues"
Yes—so you wrote me, dear They hurt not her !

NAPOLÉON (blandly)

She was a week's adventure—not worth words !
I say 'tis France—I have held out for years
Against the constant pressure brought on me
To null this sterile marriage

JOSÉPHINE (bursting into sobs)

Me you blame !

But how know you that you are not the culprit ?

NAPOLÉON

I have reason so to know—if I must say
The Polish lady you have chosen to name
Has proved the fault not mine

(JOSÉPHINE sobs more violently)

Don't cry, my cherished,

It is not really amiable of you,
Or prudent, my good little Joséphine,
With so much in the balance

JOSÉPHINE

How—know you—

What may not happen ! Wait a—little longer !

NAPOLÉON (playfully pinching her arm)

O come, now, my adored ! Haven't I already !
Nature's a dial whose shade no hand puts back,

Trick as we may ! My friend, you are forty-three
This very year in the world—

(JOSÉPHINE breaks out sobbing again)

And vain it is
To think of waiting longer , pitiful
To dream of coaxing shy fecundity
To an unlikely freak by physicking
With superstitious drugs and quackeries
That work you harm, not good The fact being so,
I have looked it squarely down—against my heart !
Solicitations voiced repeatedly
At length have shown the soundness of their shape,
And left me no denial You, at times,
My dear one, have been used to handle it
My brother Joseph, years back, frankly gave
His honest view that something should be done ,
And he, you well may know, shows no ill tinct
In his regard of you

JOSEPHINE

And what princess ?

NAPOLÉON

For living with ? No thought was given to that,
She shapes as vaguely as the Veiled—

JOSÉPHINE

No, no ,

It's Alexander's sister, I'm full sure !—
But why this craze for home-made manikins
And lineage mere of flesh ? You have said yourself
It mattered not Great Caesar, you declared,
Sank sonless to his rest , was greater deemed
Even for the isolation Frederick
Saw, too, no harm It is the fate of such,
Often, to be denied the common hope
As fine for fulness in the rare gifts
That Nature yields them O my husband long,
Will you not purge your soul to value best
That high heredity from brain to brain
Which supersedes mere sequences of blood,

That often vary more from sire to son
 Than between furthest strangers !
 Napoléon's offspring in his like must lie ,
 The second of his line be he who shows
 Napoleon's soul in later bodiment,
 The household father happening as he may !

NAPOLÉON (smilingly wiping her eyes)

Little guessed I my dear would prove her rammed
 With such a charge of apt philosophy
 When tutoring me gay arts in earlier times !
 She who at home coquetted through the years
 In which I vainly penned her wishful words
 To come and comfort me in Italy,
 Might, faith, have urged it then effectually !
 But never would you stir from Paris joys,

(With some bitterness)

And so, when arguments like this could move me,
 I heard them not , and get them only now
 When their weight dully falls But I have said
 'Tis not for me, but France—Good-bye an hour

(Kissing her)

I must dictate some letters This new move
 Of England on Madrid may mean some trouble
 Come, dwell not gloomily on this cold need
 Of waiving private joy for policy
 We are but thistle-globes on Heaven's high gales,
 And whither blown, or when, or how, or why,
 Can choose us not at all !
 I'll come to you anon, dear staunch Roustan
 Will light me in

[Exit NAPOLÉON

The scene shuts in shadow

SCENE VII

VIMIERO

A village among the hills of Portugal, about fifty miles north of Lisbon.
 Around it are disclosed, as ten on Sunday morning strikes a blue army of
 fourteen thousand men in isolated columns and a red army of eighteen
 thousand in line formation, drawn up in order of battle. The blue army is
 a French one under JUNOT, the other an English one under SIR ARTHUR
 WELLESLEY—portion of that recently landed

The August sun glazes on the shaven faces white gutters and white cross-belts of the English, who are to fight for their lives while sweating under a quarter-hundredweight in knapsack and pouches and with firelocks heavy as putlogs. They occupy a group of heights but their position is one of great danger the land abruptly terminating two miles behind their backs in lofty cliffs overhanging the Atlantic. The French occupy the valleys in the English front, and this distinction between the two forces strikes the eye—the red army is accompanied by scarce any cavalry while the blue is strong in that arm.

DUMB SHOW

The battle is begun with alternate moves that match each other like those of a chess opening. JUNO makes an oblique attack by moving a division to his right, WELLESLEY moves several brigades to his left to balance it.

A column of six thousand French then climbs the hill against the English centre, and drives in those who are planted there. The English artillery checks its adversaries and the infantry recover and charge the baffled French down the slopes. Meanwhile the latter's cavalry and artillery are attacking the village itself, and rushing on a few squadrons of English dragoons stationed there, cut them to pieces. A dust is raised by this do and moans of men and shrieks of horses are heard. Close by the carnage the little Maceira stream continues to trickle unconcernedly to the sea.

On the English left five thousand French infantry having ascended to the ridge and maintained a stinging musket fire as sharply returned, are driven down by the bayonets of six English regiments. Thereafter a brigade of the French, the northernmost, finding that the others have pursued to the bottom and are resting after the effort surprise them and bayonet them back to their original summit. The see-saw is continued by the recovery of the English, who again drive their assailants down.

The French army pauses stupefied till the columns uniting they fall back towards the opposite hills. The English seeing that their chance has come are about to pursue and settle the fortunes of the day. But a messenger dispatched from a distant group is marked riding up to the large-nosed man with a telescope and an Indian sword who his staff around him has been directing the English movements. He seems astonished at the message, appears to resent it, and prunes with a gloomy look. But he sends countermands to his generals and the pursuit ends abortively.

The French retreat without further molestation by a circuitous march into the great road to Torres Védrias by which they came leaving nearly two thousand dead and wounded on the slopes they have quitted.

Dumb Show ends and the curtain draws

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

SPAIN A ROAD NEAR ASTORGA

The eye of the spectator takes the road from the interior of a cellar which opens upon it and forms the basement of a deserted house, the roof, doors, and shutters of which have been pulled down and burnt for bivouac fires. The season is the beginning of January, and the country is covered with a sticky snow. The road itself is intermittently encumbered with heavy traffic, the surface being churned to a yellow mud that lies half knee deep, and at the numerous holes in the track forming still deeper quagmires.

In the gloom of the cellar are heaps of damp straw, in which ragged figures are lying half buried. Many of the men in the uniform of English line regiments, and the women and children in clouts of all descriptions, some being nearly naked. At the back of the cellar is revealed, through a burst door, an inner vault, where are discernible some wooden hooped wine casks, in one sticks a gimlet, and the broaching coik of another has been driven in. The wine runs into pitchers, washing-basins, shards, chamber-vessels and other extemporized receptacles. Most of the inmates are drunk, some to insensibility.

So far as the characters are doing anything they are contemplating the almost incessant traffic outside passing in one direction. It includes a medley of stragglers from the Marquis of ROMANA'S Spanish forces and the retreating English army under SIR JOHN MOORE—to which the concealed deserters belong.

FIRST DESERTER

Now he's one of the Eighty-first, and I'd gladly let that poor blade know that we've all that man can wish for here—good wine and buxom women. But if I do, we shan't have room for ourselves—hey?

He signifies a man limping past with neither fire lock nor knapsack. Where the discarded knapsack has rubbed for weeks against his shoulder-blades the jacket and shirt are fretted away, leaving his skin exposed.

SECOND DESERTER (drowsily)

He may be the Eighty-first, or th' Eighty-second, but what I say is, without fear of contradiction, I wish to the Lord I was back in old Bristol again. I'd sooner have a nipplekin of our own real "Bristol milk" than a mash-tub full of this barbarian wine!

THIRD DESERTER

'Tis like thee to be ungrateful, after putting away such a skinful on't I am as much Bristol as thee, but would as soon be here as there There ain't near such willing women, that are strict respectable too, there as hercabout and no open cellars — As there's many a slip in this country I'll have the rest of my allowance now

He crawls on his elbows to one of the barrels, and turning on his back lets the wine run down his throat

FOURTH DESERTER (to a fifth, who is snoring)

Don't treat us to such a snoaching there, mate Here's some more coming, and they'll sight us if we don't mind !

Enter without a staggering flock of military objects, some with fragments of shoes on, others bare footed, many of the latter's feet bleeding The arms and waists of some are clutched by women as tattered and bare footed as themselves They pass on

The Retreat continues More of ROMANAS Spanish limp along in disorder, then enters a miscellaneous group of English cavalry soldiers, some on foot some mounted the rearmost of the latter bestriding a shoeless foundered creature whose neck is vertebrae and mane only While passing it falls from exhaustion, the trooper extricates himself and pistols the animal through the herd He and the rest pass on

FIRST DESERTER (a new plashing of feet being heard)

Here's something more in order, or I am much mistaken (He cries out) Yes, a sergeant of the Forty-third, and what's left of their second battalion And, by God, not far behind I see shining helmets 'Tis a whole squadron of French dragoons !

Enter the sergeant He has a hacking cough but endeavours by stifling himself up to hide how it is wasting away his life He halts and looks back, till the remains of the Forty-third are abreast, to the number of some three hundred, about half of whom are crippled invalids the other half being presentable and armed soldiery

SERGEANT

Now show yer nerve, and be men If you die to day you won't have to die to-morrow Fall in ! (The miscellany falls in) All invalids and men without arms march ahead as well as they can Quick—maw-w-w-ch ! (Exit invalids, etc) Now ! Tention ! Shoulder—i-i—fawlocks ! (Order obeyed)

The sergeant hastily forms these into platoons who prime and load and seem preternaturally changed from what they were into alert soldiers

Enter French dragoons at the left back of the scene The rear platoon of

the Forty third turns fires, and proceeds The next platoon covering them does the same This is repeated several times staggering the pursuers Count French dragoons giving up the pursuit The coughing sergeant and the remnant of the Forty third march on

FOURTH DESERTER (to a woman lying beside him)

What d'ye think o' that, my honey? It fairly makes me a man again Come, wake up! We must be getting along somehow (He regards the woman more closely) Why—my little chick? Look here, friends (They look, and the woman is found to be dead) If I didn't think that her poor knees felt cold! And only an hour ago I swore I'd marry her!

They remain silent The Retreat continues in the snow without now in the form of a file of ox carts followed by a mixed rabble of English and Spanish, and mules and muleteers hired by English officers to carry their baggage The muleteers looking about and seeing that the French dragoons have been there, cut the bands which hold on the heavy packs, and scamper off with their mules

A VOICE (behind)

The Commander-in-Chief is determined to maintain discipline and they must suffer No more pillaging here It is the worst case of brutality and plunder that we have had in this wretched time!

Enter an English captain of hussars, a lieutenant, a guard of about a dozen, and three men as prisoners

CAPTAIN

If they choose to draw lots, only one need be made an example of But they must be quick about it The advance-guard of the enemy is not far behind

The three prisoners appear to draw lots, and the one on whom the lot falls is blindfolded Excuse the hussars behind a wall, with carbines A volley is heard and something falls The wretches in the cellar shudder

FOURTH DESERTER

'Tis the same for us but for this heap of straw Ah—my doxy is the only one of us who is safe and sound!

(He kisses the dead woman)

Retreat continues A train of six-horse baggage-waggons lurches past, a mounted sergeant alongside Among the baggage lie wounded soldiers and sick women

SERGEANT OF THE WAGGON-TRAIN

If so be they are dead, ye may as well drop 'em over the tail-board 'Tis no use straining the horses unnecessarily

Waggons halt Two of the wounded who have just died are taken out, laid down by the roadside and some muddy snow scraped over them. Exit waggons and sergeant

An interval More English troops pass on horses, mostly shoeless and foundered

Enter SIR JOHN MOORE and officers MOORE appears in the pale evening light as a handsome man far on in the forties, the orbits of his dark eyes showing marks of deep anxiety He is talking to some of his staff with vehement emphasis and gesture They cross the scene and go on out of sight, and the squashing of their horses' hoofs in the snowy mud dies away

FIFTH DESERTER (incoherently in his sleep)

Poise fawlocks—open pans—right hands to pouch—handle ca'tridge—bring it—quick motion—bite top well off—pume—shut pans—cast about—load——

FIRST DESERTER (throwing a shoe at the sleeper)

Shut up that! D'ye think you are a 'cruty in the awkward squad still?

SECOND DESERTER

I don't know what he thinks, but I know what I feel! Would that I were at home in England again, where there's old-fashioned tupples, and a proper God Almighty instead of this eternal 'Ooman and baby,—ay, at home a-leaning against old Bristol Bridge, and no questions asked, and the winter sun slanting friendly over Baldwin Street as 'a used to do! 'Tis my very belief, though I have lost all sure reckoning, that if I were there, and in good health, 'twould be New Year's day about now. What it is over here I don't know. Av, to-night we should be a-setting in the tap of the "Adam and Eve"—lifting up the tune of "The Light o' the Moon" 'Twer a romantic thing enough 'A used to go som'at like this (he sings in a nasal tone) —

"O I thought it had been day,
And I stole from her away,
But it proved to be the light o' the moon!"

Retreat continues with infantry in good order. Hearing the singing one of the officers looks around, and detaching a patrol enters the ruined house with the file of men the body of soldiers marching on. The inmates of the cellar bury themselves in the straw. The officer peers about, and seeing no one prods the straw with his sword.

VOICES (under the straw)

Oh! Hell! Stop it! We'll come out! Mercy! Quarter!
[The hulkers are uncovered]

OFFICER

If you are well enough to sing bawdy songs, you are well enough to march. So out of it—or you'll be shot, here and now!

SEVERAL

You may shoot us, captain, or the French may shoot us, or the devil may take us, we don't care which! Only we can't stay. Pity the women, captain, but do what you will with us!

The searchers pass over the wounded and stir out those capable of marching, both men and women, so far as they discover them. They are pricked on by the patrol. Eloquent patrol and deserters in its charge.

Those who remain look stolidly at the highway. The English Rear guard of cavalry crosses the scene and passes out. An interval. It grows dusk.

SPIRIT IRONIC

Quaint poesy, and real romance of war!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Mock on, Shade, if thou wilt! But others find
Poesy ever lurk where pit-pats poor mankind!*

The scene is cloaked in darkness

SCENE II

THE SAME

It is nearly midnight. The fugitives who remain in the cellar having slept off the effects of the wine are awakened by a new tramping of cavalry which becomes more and more persistent. It is the French, who now fill the road. The advance-guard having passed by, DELABONDES' division, LORGE'S division, MERLE'S division and others, successively cross the gloom.

Presently come the outlines of the Imperial Guard and then, with a start, those in hiding realize their situation, and are wide awake. NAPOLEON enters with his staff. He has just been overtaken by a courier, and orders those round him to halt.

NAPOLEON

Let there a fire be lit—ay, here and now

The lines within these letters brook no pause

In mastering their purport

Some of the French approach the ruined house and, appropriating what wood is still left there, heap it by the roadside and set it alight. A mixed rain and snow falls, and the sputtering flames throw a glare all round.

SECOND DESERTER (under his voice)

We be shot corpses! Ay, faith, we be! Why didn't I stick to England, and true doxology, and leave fore'gn doxies and their wine alone! Mate, can ye squeeze another shroudful from the cask there, for I feel my time is come! O that I had but the barrel of that firelock I throwed away, and that wasted powder to prime and load! This bullet I chaw to squench my hunger would do the rest! Yes, I could pick him off now!

FIRST DESERTER

You lie low with your picking off, or he may pick off you! Thank God the babies are gone. Maybe we shan't be noticed, if we've but the courage to do nothing, and keep hid.

NAPOLÉON dismounts, approaches the fire, and looks around

NAPOLÉON

Another of their dead horses here, I see

OFFICER

Yes, sire. We have counted eighteen hundred odd
From Benavente hither, pistoled thus
Some we'd to finish for them headlong haste
Spared them no time for mercy to their biutes
One-half their cavalry now tramps afoot

NAPOLÉON

And what's the tale of waggons we've picked up?

OFFICER

Spanish and all abandoned, some four hundred,
Of magazines and firelocks, full ten load,
And stragglers and their girls a numerous crew

NAPOLÉON

Ay, devil—plenty those! Licentious ones
These English, as all canting peoples are—
And prisoners?

OFFICER

Seven hundred English, sire,
Spaniards five thousand more

NAPOLÉON

'Tis not amiss

To keep the new year up they run away !

(He soliloquizes as he begins tearing open the dispatches)

Nor Pitt nor Fox displayed such blundering
As glares in this campaign ! It is, indeed,
Enlarging Folly to Foolhardiness
To combat France by land ! But how expect
Aught that can claim the name of government
From Canning, Castlereagh, and Peirceval,
Caballeis all—poor sorry politicians—
To whom has fallen the luck of reaping in
The harvestings of Pitt's bold husbandry

He unfolds a dispatch, and looks for something to sit on A cloak is thrown over a log and he settles to reading by the firelight The others stand round The light, crossed by the snow flakes flickers on his unneulthy face and stoutening figure He sinks into the rigidity of profound thought till his features lour

So this is their reply ! They have done with me !
Britain declines negotiating further—
Flouts France and Russia indiscriminately
“Since one dethrones and keeps as prisoners
The most legitimate kings”—that means myself—
“The other suffers their unworthy treatment
For sordid interests”—that's for Alexander !
And what is Georgy made to say besides ?—
“Pacific overtures to us are wiles
Woven to unnerve the generous nations round
Lately escaped the galling yoke of France,
Or waiting so to do Such, then, being seen,
These tentatives must be regarded now
As finally forgone, and crimson war
Be faced to its fell worst, unflinchingly ”
—The devil take their lecture ! What am I,
That England should retain such insolence ?

He jumps up, furious, and walks to and fro beside the fire By and by cooling he sits down again

Now as to hostile signs in Austria

(He breaks another seal and reads)

Ah,—swords to cross with her some day in spring !
Thinking me cornered over here in Spain

She speaks without disguise, the covert pact
 'Twixt her and England owning now quite frankly,
 Careless how works its knowledge upon me
 She, England, Germany well—I can front them !
 That there is no sufficient force of French
 Between the Elbe and Rhine to prostrate her,
 Let new and terrible experience
 Soon disillusion her of ! Yea, she may aim
 The opportunity she late let slip
 Will not subserve her now !

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Has he no heart-hunts that this Austrian court,
 Whereon his mood takes mould so masterful,
 Is rearing nervily in its nursery-room
 A future wife for him ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou dost but guess it,
 And how should his heart know ?*

NAPOLÉON (opening and reading another dispatch)

Now eastward Ohè !—
 The Orient likewise looms full sombriely
 The Turk declines pacifically to yield
 What I have promised Alexander Ah !
 As for Constantinople being his prize
 I'll see him frozen first His flight's too high ! *
 And showing that I think so makes him cool (Rises)
 Is Soult the Duke Dalmatia yet at hand ?

OFFICER

He has arrived along the Leon road
 Just now, your Majesty, and only waits
 The close of your perusals

Enter SOULT, who is greeted by NAPOLÉON

FIRST DESERTER

Good Lord deliver us from all great men, and take me back
 again to humble life ! That's Marshal, Soult the Duke of
 Dalmatia !

SECOND DESERTER

The Duke of Damnation for our poor rear, by the look on't !

FIRST DESERTER

Yes—he'll make 'em rub their poor rears before he has done with 'em ! But we must overtake 'em to-morrow by a cross-cut, please God !

NAPOLÉON (pointing to the dispatches)

Here's matter enough for me, Duke, and to spare
 The ominous contents are like the threats
 The ancient prophets dealt rebellious Judah !
 Austria we soon shall have upon our hands,
 And England still is fierce for fighting on,—
 Strange humour in a concord loving land !
 So now I must to Paris straight away—
 At least, to Valladolid, so as to stand
 More apt for couriers than I do out here
 In this far western corner, and to mark
 The veerings of these new developments,
 And blow a counter-breeze

Then, too, there's Lannes, still sweating at the siege
 Of Sullen Zaragoza as 'twere hell
 Him I must further counsel how to close
 His twice too tedious battery—You, then, Soult—
 Ney is not yet, I gather, quite come up ?

SOULT

He's near, sire, on the Benavente road,
 But some hours to the rear I reckon, still

NAPOLÉON

Him I'll direct to come to your support
 In this pursuit and harassment of Moore
 Wherein you take my place You'll follow up
 And chase the flying English to the sea
 Bear hard on them, the bayonet at their loins
 With Merle's and Mermet's corps just gone ahead,
 And Delaborde's, and Heudelet's here at hand
 While Lorge's and Lahoussaye's picked dragoons
 Will follow, and Franceschi's cavalry
 To Ney I am writing that, in case of need,
 He will support, with Marchand and Mathieu—

Your total thus of seventy thousand odd,
 Ten thousand horse, and cannon to five score,
 Should near annihilate this British force,
 And carve a triumph large in history

(He bends over the fire and makes some notes rapidly)

I move into Astorga, then turn back,
 (Though only in my person do I turn)
 And leave to you the destinies of Spain

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*More turning may be here than he designs
 In this small, sudden, swift turn backward, he
 Suggests one turning from his epilogue*

The characters disperse, the fire sinks, and snowflakes and darkness blot out all

SCENE III

BEFORE CORUÑA

The town, harbour and hills at the back are viewed from an aerial point to the north, over the lighthouse known as the Tower of Hercules, rising at the extremity of the tongue of land on which La Coruña stands, the open ocean being in the spectator's rear

In the foreground the most prominent feature is the walled old town with its white towers and houses shaping itself aloft over the harbour. The new town, and its painted fronts, show bright below even on this cloudy winter afternoon. Further off behind the harbour—now crowded with British transports of all sizes—is a series of low broken hills, intersected by hedges and stone walls

A mile behind these low inner hills is beheld a rocky chain of outer and loftier heights that completely command the former. Nothing behind them is seen but grey sky

DUMB SHOW

On the inner hills aforesaid the little English army—a pathetic fourteen thousand of foot only—is just deploying into line. HOPKINS' division on the left, BAIRD'S to the right. PACEY with the reserve is in the hollow to the left behind them, and FRASER'S division still further back shapes out on a slight rise to the right

This harassed force now appears as if composed of quite other than the men observed in the Retreat insubordinately straggling along like vagabonds. Yet they are the same men, suddenly stiffened and grown amenable to discipline by the satisfaction of standing to the enemy at last. They resemble a double palisade of red stakes, the only gaps being those that the melancholy necessity of scant numbers entails here and there

Over the heads of these red men are beheld on the outer hills the twenty thousand French that have been pushed along the road at the heels of the English by SOUIT. They have an ominous superiority, both in position and in their abundance of cavalry and artillery over the slender lines of English foot. The left of this bad ground, facing HOPE, is made up of DELABORDÈS and MELLES divisions, while in a deadly arc round BAIRD, from whom they are divided only by the village of Elvina, are placed MERMIER'S division, LAHOUSSE'S and LONG'S dragoons, FRANCESCINI'S cavalry, and, highest up of all, a formidable battery of eleven great guns that rake the whole British line.

It is now getting on for two o'clock, and a stir of activity has lately been noticed along the French front. Three columns are discerned descending from their position: the first towards the division of SIR DAVID BAIRD, the weakest point in the English line, the next towards the centre, the third towards the left. A heavy cannonade from the battery supports this advance.

The clash ensues: the English being swept down in swathes by the enemy's artillery. The opponents meet face to face at the village in the valley between them, and the fight there grows furious.

SIR JOHN MOORE is seen galloping to the front under the gloomy sky.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I seem to vision in San Carlos' garden,
That rises salient in the upper town,
His name, and date, and doing, set within
A filmy outline like a monument,
Which yet is but the insubstantial air*

SPIRIT OF THE YLARS

Read visions as conjectures, not as more

When MOORE arrives at the front FRASER and PACFT move to the right, where the English are most sorely pressed. A grape shot strikes off BAIRD'S arm. There is a little confusion, and he is borne to the rear, while MAJOR NAPIER disappears a prisoner.

In elligence of these misfortunes is brought to SIR JOHN MOORE. He goes further forward and precedes in person the Forty-second regiment and a battalion of the Guards who, with fixed bayonets, bear the enemy back, MOORE'S gestures in cheering them being notably energetic. Pursuers pursued and SIR JOHN himself pass out of sight behind the hill. Dumb Show ends.

The point of vision descends to the immediate rear of the English position. The early January evening has begun to spread its shades, and shouts of dismay are heard from behind the hill over which MOORE and the advancing lines have vanished.

Straggling soldiers cross in the gloom.

FIRST STRAGGLER

He's struck by a cannon-ball, that I know, but he's not killed,
that I pray God A'mighty

SECOND STRAGGLER

Better he were His shoulder is knocked to a bag of splinters
As Sir David was wounded, Sir John was anxious that the right
should not give way, and went forward to keep it firm

FIRST STRAGGLER

He didn't keep *you* firm, howsomever

SECOND STRAGGLER

Not you, for that matter

FIRST STRAGGLER

Well, 'twas a serious place for a man with no priming horn,
and a character to lose, so I judged it best to fall to the rear by
lying down A man can't fight by the regulations without his
priming-horn, and I am none of your slovenly anyhow fighters

SECOND STRAGGLER

'Nation, having dropped my flint-pouch, I was the same If
you'd had your priming-horn, and I my flints, mind ye, we should
have been there now! Then, forty-whoy, that we are now is the
fault o' Government for not supplying new ones from the reserve!

FIRST STRAGGLER

What did he say as he led us on?

SECOND STRAGGLER

"Forty-second, remember Egypt!" I heard it with my own
ears Yes, that was his strict testament

FIRST STRAGGLER

"Remember Egypt" Ay, and I do, for I was there!
Upon my salvation, here's for back again, whether or no!

SECOND STRAGGLER

But here "Forty-second, remember Egypt," he said in the
very eye of that French battery playing through us And the
next omen was that he was struck off his horse, and fell on his
back to the ground I remembered Egypt, and what had just
happened too, so thorough well that I remembered the way over

this wall!—Captain Hardinge, who was close to him, jumped off his horse, and he and one in the ranks lifted him, and are now bringing him along

FIRST STRAGGLER

Nevertheless, here's for back again, come what will Remember Egypt! Huziah!

[Exit First straggler]

Second straggler ponders then suddenly follows First Enter COLONEL ANDERSON and others hastily

AN OFFICER

Now fetch a blanket He must be carried in

[Shouts heard]

COLONEL ANDERSON

That means we are gaining ground! Had fate but left
This last blow undecreed, the hour had shone
A star amid these girdling days of gloom!

[Exit]

Enter in the obscurity six soldiers of the Forty-second bearing SIR JOHN MOORE on their joined hands CAPTAIN HARDINGE walks beside and steadies him He is temporarily laid down in the shelter of a wall, his left shoulder being pounded away, the arm dangling by a shield of flesh

Enter COLONEL GRAHAM and CAPTAIN WOODFORD

GRAHAM

The wound is more than serious, Woodford, fair
Ride for a surgeon—one of those, perhaps,
Who tend Sir David Baird? (Exit Captain Woodford)
His blood throbs forth so fast, that I have dark fears
He'll drain to death ere anything can be done!

HARDINGE

I'll try to staunch it—since no skill's in call

(He takes off his sash and endeavours to bind the wound with it MOORE smiles and shakes his head)

There's not much checking it! The rent's too gross
A dozen lives could pass that thoroughfare!

Enter a soldier with a blanket They lift MOORE into it During the operation the pommel of his sword, which he still wears, is accidentally thrust into the wound

I'll loose the sword—it bruises you, Sir John

[He begins to unbuckle it]

MOORE

No Let it be ! One hurt more matters not
I wish it to go off the field with me

HARDINGE

I like the sound of that It augurs well
For your much-hoped recovery

MOORE (looking sadly at his wound)

Haidinge, no
Nature is nonplussed there ! My shoulder's gone,
And this left side laid open to my lungs
There's but a brief breath now for me, at most
Could you—move me along—that I may glimpse
Still how the battle's going ?

HARDINGE

Ay, Sir John—

A few yards higher up, where we can see

He is borne in the blanket a little way onward, and lifted so that he can
view the valley and the action

MOORE (brightly)

They seem to be advancing Yes, it is so !

Enter SIR JOHN HOPE

Ah, Hope !—I am doing badly here enough,
But they are doing rarely well out there

(Presses Hope's hand)

Don't leave ! my speech may flag with this fierce pain,
But you can talk to me —Are the French checked ?

HOPE

My dear friend, they are borne back steadily

MOORE (his voice weakening)

I hope that England—will be satisfied—
I hope my native land—will do me justice !
I shall be blamed for sending Crauford off
Along the Orlense road But had I not,
Bonaparte would have headed us that way

HOPE

O would that Soult had but accepted battle
By Lugo town! We should have crushed him there

MOORE

Yes yes —But it has never been my lot
To owe much to good luck, nor was it then
Good fortune has been mine, but, (bitterly) mostly so
By the exhaustion of all shapes of bad!
Well, this does not become a dying man,
And others have been chastened more than I
By Him who holds us in His hollowed hand!
I grieve for Zaragoza if, as said,
The siege goes sorely with her, which it must
I heard when at Dahagun that late day
That she was holding out heroically
But I must leave such now —You'll see my friends
As early as you can? Tell them the whole,
Say to my mother (His voice fails)
Hope, Hope, I have so much to charge you with,
But weakness clams my tongue! If I must die
Without a word with Stanhope, ask him, Hope,
To—name me to his sister You may know
Of what there was between us?
Is Colonel Graham well, and all my aides?
My will I have made—it is in Colborne's charge
With other papers

HOPE

He's now coming up

Enter MAJOR COLBORNE, principal aide de-camp

MOORE

Are the French beaten, Colborne, or repulsed?
Alas! you see what they have done to me!

COLBORNE

I do, Sir John I am more than sad thereof!
In brief time now the surgeon will be here
The French retreat—pushed from Elvina fair

MOORE

That's good! Is Paget anywhere about?

COLBORNE

He's at the front, Sir John

MOORE

Remembrance to him !

Enter two surgeons

Ah, doctors,—you can scarcely mend up me —
 And yet I feel so tough—I have feverish fears
 My dying will waste a long and tedious while
 But not too long, I hope !

SURGEONS (after a hasty examination)

You must be borne

In to your lodgings instantly, Sir John
 Please strive to stand the motion—if you can ,
 They will keep step, and bear you steadily

MOORE

Anything Surely fainter ebbs that fire ?

COLBORNE

Yes we must be advancing everywhere
 Colbert their General, too, they have lost, I learn

They lift him by stretching their sashes under the blanket and begin
 moving off A light waggon enters

MOORE

Who's in that waggon ?

HARDINGE

Colonel Wynch, Sir John

He's wounded, but he urges you to take it

MOORE

No I will not This suits Don't come with me ,
 There's more for you to do out here as yet

(Cheerful shouts)

A-ha ! 'Tis *this* way I have wished to die !

Exeunt slowly in the twilight MOORE, bears surgeons etc towards
 Coruña

The scene darkens

SCENE IV

CORUÑA NEAR THE RAMPARTS

It is just before dawn on the following morning, objects being still in distinct the features of the elevated enclosure of San Carlos can be recognized in dim outline, and also those of the Old Town of Coruña around, though scarcely a lamp is shining. The numerous transports in the harbour beneath have still their riding-lights burning.

In a nook of the town walls a lantern glimmers. Some English soldiers of the Ninth regiment are hastily digging a grave there with extemporized tools.

A VOICE (from the gloom some distance off)

' I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live "

The soldiers look up and see entering at the further end of the patch of ground a slow procession. It advances by the light of lanterns in the hands of some members of it. At moments the fitful rays fall upon bearers carrying a coffinless body rolled in a blanket with a military cloak roughly thrown over by way of pall. It is brought towards the incomplete grave and followed by HOPE, GRAHAM, ANDERSON, COLBORNE, HARDINGE, and several aides-de camp, a chaplain preceding.

FIRST SOLDIER

They are here, almost as hasteful as ourselves
There is no time to dig much deeper now
Level a bottom just as far's we've got
He'll couch as calmly in this scrabbled hole
As in a royal vault !

SECOND SOLDIER

Would it had been a foot deeper, here among foreigners, with strange manures manufactured out of no one knows what ! Surely we can give him another six inches ?

FIRST SOLDIER

There is no time. Just make the bottom true.

The meagre procession approaches the spot, and waits while the half-dug grave is roughly finished by the men of the Ninth. They step out of it, and another of them holds a lantern to the chaplain's book. The winter day slowly dawns.

CHAPLAIN

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live,
and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a
flower, he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in
one stay."

A gun is fired from the French battery not far off, then another. The
ships in the harbour take in their riding-lights.

COLBORNE (in a low voice)

I knew that dawn would see them open fire.

HOPE

We must perforce be swift to use our time.

Would we had closed our too sad office sooner!

As the body is lowered another discharge echoes. They glance gloomily
at the heights where the French are ranged and then into the grave.

CHAPLAIN

"We therefore commit his body to the ground. Earth to
earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." (Another gun.)

A spent ball falls not far off. They put out their lanterns. Continued
firing. Some shot splashing into the harbour below them.

HOPE

In mercy to the living, who are thrust
Upon our care for their deliverance,
And run much hazard till they are embroiled,
We must abide these duties to the dead,
Who will not mind be they abridged or no.

HARDINGE

And could he mind, would be the man to bid it.

HOPE

We shall do well, then, curtly to conclude
These mutilated prayers—our hurried best!—
And what's left unsaid, feel.

CHAPLAIN (his words broken by the cannonade)

"We give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased
Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful
world. Who also hath taught us not to be sorry, as men

without hope, for them that sleep in Him Giant this,
through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer '—

OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

Amen !

The diggers of the Ninth hastily fill in the grave, and the scene shuts as the mournful figures retire

SCENE V

VIENNA A CAFE IN THE STEPHANS-PLATZ

An evening between light and dark is disclosed, some lamps being lit. The huge body and tower of St. Stephen's rise into the sky some way off, the western gleam still touching the upper stonework. Groups of people are seated at the tables drinking and reading the newspapers. One very animated group which includes an Englishman, is talking loudly. A citizen near looks up from his newspaper.

CITIZEN (to the Englishman)

I read, sir, here, the troubles you discuss
Of your so gallant army under Moore
His was a spirit baffled but not quelled,
And in his death there shone a stoicism
That lent retreat the rays of victory

ENGLISHMAN

It was so. While men chide they will admire him,
And frowning, praise. I could nigh prophesy
That the unwonted crosses he has borne
In his career of sharp vicissitude
Will tinct his story with a tender charm,
And grant the memory of his strenuous feats
As long a lease within the minds of men
As conquerors hold there—Does the sheet give news
Of how the troops reached home?

CITIZEN (looking again at the paper)

Yes, from your press
It quotes that they arrived at Plymouth Sound
Mid dreadful weather and much suffering
It states they looked the very ghosts of men
So heavily had hunger told on them,
And the fatigues and toils of the retreat

Several were landed dead, and many died
As they were borne along At Portsmouth, too,
Sir David Baud, still helpless from his wound
Was carried in a cot, sheet-pale and thin,
And Sir John Hope, lank as a skeleton —
Thereunto is added, with authority,
That a new expedition soon will fit,
And start again for Spain

ENGLISHMAN

I have heard as much

CITIZEN

You'll do it next time, sir And so shall we !

SECOND CITIZEN (regarding the church tower opposite)

You witnessed the High Service over there
They held this morning ? (To the Englishman)

ENGLISHMAN

Ay, I did get in,
Though not without hard striving, such the throng,
But travellers roam to waste who shyly roam
And I pushed like the rest

SECOND CITIZEN

Our young Archduchess
Maria Louisa was, they tell me, present ?

ENGLISHMAN

O yes the whole Imperial family,
And when the Bishop called all blessings down
Upon the Landwehr colours there displayed,
Enthusiasm touched the sky—she sharing it

SECOND CITIZEN

Commendable in her, and spirited,
After the graceless insults to the Court
The Paris journals flaunt—not voluntarily,
But by his ordering Magician-like
He holds them in his fist, and at his squeeze
They bubble what he wills ! Yes, she's a girl
Of patriotic build, and hates the French

Quite lately she was overheard to say
 She had met with most convincing auguries
 That this year Bonaparte was starved to die

ENGLISHMAN

Your aims must render its fulfilment sure

SECOND CITIZEN

Right ! And we have the opportunity,
 By upping to the war in suddenness,
 And catching him unaware The pink and flower
 Of all his veteran troops are now in Spain
 Fully engaged with yours, while those he holds
 In Germany are scattered far and wide

FIRST CITIZEN (looking up again from his newspaper)

I see here that he vows and guarantees
 Inviolable bounds to all our territories
 If we but pledge to carry out forthwith
 A prompt disarmament Since that's his price
 Hell ruin his guarantees ! Too long he has fooled us
 (To the Englishman) I think, sir, to your land's consistency
 While we and all the kindred Europe States
 Alternately have wooed and warred with him,
 You have not bent to blowing hot and cold,
 But held you sturdily inimical !

ENGLISHMAN (laughing)

Less Christian-like forgiveness mellows us
 Than Continental souls ! (They drink)

A band is heard in a distant street, with shouting Enter third and fourth
 citizens, followed by others

FIRST CITIZEN

More news afloat ?

THIRD AND FOURTH CITIZENS

Yea, an announcement that the Archduke Charles
 Is given the chief command

FIRST, SECOND, ETC., CITIZENS

Huzza ! Right so !

A clinking of glasses, rising from seats, and general enthusiasm

SECOND CITIZEN

If war had not so patly been declaired,
Our howitzers and firelocks of themselves
Would have gone off to shame us ! This forenoon
Some of the Landwehr met me , they are hot
For setting out, though but few months enrolled

ENGLISHMAN

That moves reflection somewhat They are young
For measuring with the veteran files of France !

FIRST CITIZEN

Napoleon's army swarms with tender youth,
His last conscription besomed into it
Thousands of merest boys But he contrives
To mix them in the field with seasoned frames

SECOND CITIZEN

The sadly-seen mistake this country made
Was that of grounding hostile arms at all
We should have fought irreconcilably—
Have been consistent as the English are
The French are our hereditary foes,
And this adventurer of the saucy sword,
This sacrilegious sligher of our shames,
Stands author of all our ills
Our harvest fields and fruits he tramples on,
Accumulating ruin in our land
Think of what mournings in the last sad war
'Twas his to instigate and answer for !
Time never can efface the glint of tears
In palaces, in shops, in fields, in cots,
From women widowed, sonless, fatherless,
That then oppressed our eyes There is no salve
For such deep harrowings but to fight again ,
The enfranchisement of Europe hangs thereon,
And long she has lingered for the sign to crush him
That signal we have given , the time is come !

(Thumping on the tables)

FIFTH CITIZEN (at another table, looking up from his paper and speaking across)

I see that Russia has declined to aid us,
And says she knows that Prussia likewise must,
So that the mission of Prince Schwarzenberg
To Alexander's Court has closed in failure

THIRD CITIZEN

Ay—through his being honest—fatal sin!—
Probing too plainly for the Emperor's ears
His ominous friendship with Napoleon

ENGLISHMAN

Some say he was more than honest with the Tsar
Hinting that his becoming an ally
Makes him accomplice of the Corsican
In the unprincipled dark overthrow
Of his poor trusting childish Spanish friends—
Which gave the Tsar offence

THIRD CITIZEN

And our best bid—
The last, most delicate dish—a tastelessness

FIRST CITIZEN

What was Prince Schwarzenberg's best bid, I pray?

THIRD CITIZEN

The offer of the heir of Austria's hand
For Alexander's sister the Grand-Duchess

ENGLISHMAN

He could not have accepted, if or no
She is inscribed as wife for Bonaparte

FIRST CITIZEN

I doubt that text!

ENGLISHMAN

Time's context soon will show

SECOND CITIZEN

The Russian Cabinet can not for long
 Resist the aidour of the Russian ranks
 To march with us the moment we achieve
 Our first loud victory !

A band is heard playing afar and shouting People are seen hurrying
 past in the direction of the sounds Enter sixth citizen

SIXTH CITIZEN

The Archduke Charles
 Is passing the Ringstrasse just by now,
 His regiment at his heels !

The younger sitters jump up with animation, and go out the elder mostly
 remaining

SECOND CITIZEN

Realm never faced
 The grim of a more fierce necessity
 For horrid war, than ours at this tense time !
 The sounds of band playing and huzzing wane away Citizens return

FIRST CITIZEN

More news, my friends, of swiftly swelling zeal ?

RE-ENTERED CITIZENS

Ere passing down the Ring, the Archduke paused
 And gave the soldiers speech, enkindling them
 As sunrise a confronting throng of panes
 That glaze a many-windowed east facade
 Hot volunteers vamp in from vill and plain—
 More than we need in furthest sacrifice !

FIRST, SECOND, ETC, CITIZENS

Huzza ! Right so ! Good ! Forwards ! God be praised !

They stand up, and a clinking of glasses follows till they subside to
 quietude and a reperusal of newspapers Nightfall succeeds Dancing-
 rooms are lit up in an opposite street and dancing begins The figures are
 seen gracefully moving round to the throbbing strains of a string band which
 plays a new waltzing movement with a warlike name soon to spread over
 Europe The dancers sing patriotic words as they whirl

The night closes over

ACT FOURTH

SCENE I

A ROAD OUT OF VIENNA

It is a morning in early May Rain descends in torrents, accompanied by pearls of thunder The tepid downpour has caused the trees to assume as by magic a clothing of limp green leafage, and has turned the ruts of the uneven highway into little canals

A drenched travelling-chariot is passing, with a meagre escort In the interior are seated four women the ARCHDUCHESS MARIA LOUISA in age about eighteen, her stepmother the EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA, third wife of FRANCIS, only four years older than the ARCHDUCHESS, and two ladies of the Austrian Court Behind come attendant carriages bearing servants and luggage

The inmates remain for the most part silent and appear to be in a gloomy frame of mind From time to time they glance at the moist spring scenes which pass without in a perspective distorted by the rain-drops that slide down the panes, and by the blurring effect of the travellers' breathings Of the four the one who keeps in the best spirits is the ARCHDUCHESS, a fair, blue eyed, full-figured, round-lipped maiden

MARIA LOUISA

Whether the rain comes in or not I must open the window
Please allow me (She straightway opens it)

EMPRESS (groaning)

Yes—open or shut it—I don't care I am too ill to care for anything! (The carriage jolts into a hole) O woe! To think that I am driven away from my husband's home in such a miserable conveyance, along such a road, and in such weather as this (Peal of thunder) There are his guns!

MARIA LOUISA

No, my dear one It cannot be his guns They told us when we started that he was only half-way from Ratisbon hither, so that he must be nearly a hundred miles off as yet, and a large army cannot move fast

EMPRESS

He should never have been let come nearer than Ratisbon!
The victory at Echmühl was fatal for us O Echmühl, Echmühl!
I believe he will overtake us before we get to Buda

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING

If so, your Majesty, shall we be chained as prisoners and marched to Paris ?

EMPERESS

Undoubtedly But I shouldn't much care It would not be worse than this I feel sodden all through me, and flowzy, and broken ' (She closes her eyes as if to doze)

MARIA LOUISA

It is dreadful to see her suffer so ! (Shutting the window) If the roads were not so bad I should not mind I almost wish we had stayed , though when he arrives the cannonade will be terrible

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING

I wonder if he will get into Vienna Will his men knock down all the houses, madam ?

MARIA LOUISA

If he do get in, I am sure his triumph will not be for long My uncle the Archduke Charles is at his heels ! I have been told many important prophecies about Bonaparte's end, which is fast nearing, it is asserted It is he, they say, who is referred to in the Apocalypse He is doomed to die this year at Cologne, in an inn called "The Red Crab" I don't attach too much importance to all these predictions, but O, how glad I should be to see them come true !

SECOND LADY-IN-WAITING

So should we all, madam What would become of his divorce-scheme then ?

MARIA LOUISA

Perhaps there is nothing in that report One can hardly believe such gossip

SECOND LADY-IN-WAITING

But they say, your Imperial Highness, that he certainly has decided to sacrifice the Empress Josephine, and that at the meeting, last October with the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt, it was even settled that he should marry as his second wife the Grand-Duchess Anne

MARIA LOUISA

I am sure that the Empress her mother will never allow one of the house of Romanoff to marry with a bourgeois Corsican I wouldn't if I were she !

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING

Perhaps, your Highness, they are not so particular in Russia, where they are rather new themselves, as we in Austria, with your ancient dynasty, are in such matters

MARIA LOUISA

Perhaps not Though the Empress-mother is a pompous old thing, as I have been told by Prince Schwarzenberg, who was negotiating there last winter My father says it would be a dreadful misfortune for our country if they were to marry Though if we are to be exiled I don't see how anything of that sort can matter much I hope my father is safe !

An officer of the escort rides up to the carriage window, which is opened

EMPRESS (unclosing her eyes)

Any more misfortunes ?

OFFICER

A rumour is a-wind, your Majesty,
That the French host, the Emperor in its midst,
Lannes, Masséna, and Bessières in its van,
Advancing hither along the Ratisbon road,
Has seized the castle and town of Ebersberg,
And burnt all down, with frightful massacre,
Vast heaps of dead and wounded being consumed,
So that the streets stink strong with frizzled flesh —
The enemy, ere this, has crossed the Traun,
Hurling brave Hiller's army back on us,
And marches on Amstetten—thirty miles
Less distant from Vienna than before !

EMPRESS

The Lord show mercy to us ! But O why
Did not the Archdukes intercept the foe ?

OFFICER

His Highness Archduke Charles, your Majesty,
 After his sore repulse Bohemia-wards,
 Could not proceed with strength and speed enough
 To close in junction with the Archduke John
 And Archduke Louis, as was their intent
 So Marshall Lannes swings swiftly on Vienna,
 With Oudinot's and Demont's might of foot,
 Then Massena and all his mounted men,
 And then Napoléon, Gurais, Camassiers,
 And the main body of the Imperial force

EMPRESS

Alas for poor Vienna!

OFFICER

Even so!

Your Majesty has fled it none too soon

The window is shut, and the procession disappears behind the sheets of rain

SCENE II

THE ISLAND OF LOBAU, WITH WAGRAM BEYOND

The north horizon at the back of the bird's eye prospect is the high ground stretching from the Bisamberg on the left to the plateau of Wagram on the right. In front of these elevations spreads the wide plain of the Marchfeld, open, treeless and with scarcely a house upon it.¹

In the foreground the Danube crosses the scene with a graceful slowness looping itself round the numerous wooded islands therein. The largest of these, immediately under the eye, is the Lobau, which strnds like a knot in the gnarled grain represented by the running river.

On this island can be discerned, closely packed in enormous dark multitude of foot horse, and artillery in French uniforms the numbers reaching to a hundred and seventy thousand.

Lifting our eyes to discover what may be opposed to them we perceive on the Wagram plateau aforesaid, and right and left in front of it extended lines of Austrians, whitish and glittering, to the number of a hundred and forty thousand.

The July afternoon turns to evening the evening to twilight. A species of summer which pervades the living spectacle raises expectation till the very air itself seems strained with suspense. A huge event of some kind is awaiting birth.

¹ At this date

DUMB SHOW

The first change under the cloak of night is that the tightly packed regiments on the island are got under arms. The soldiery are like a thicket of reeds in which every reed should be a man.

A large bridge connects the island with the further shore, as well as some smaller bridges. Opposite are high redoubts and ravelins that the Austrians have constructed for opposing the passage across which the French ostentatiously set themselves to attempt by the large bridge, amid heavy cannonading.

But the movement is a feint though this is not perceived by the Austrians as yet. The real movement is on the right hand of the foreground behind a spur of the isle and out of sight of the enemy, where several large rafts and flat boats each capable of carrying three hundred men, are floated out from a screened creek.

Chosen battalions enter upon these which immediately begin to cross with their burden. Simultaneously from other screened nooks secretly prepared floating bridges in sections are moved forth joined together and defended by those who crossed on the rafts.

At two o'clock in the morning the thousands of cooped soldiers begin to cross the bridges producing a scene which, on such a scale, was never before witnessed in the history of war. A great discharge from the batteries accompanies this manœuvre arousing the Austrians to a like cannonade.

The night has been obscure for summer time, and there is no moon. The storm now breaks in a tempestuous downpour, with lightning and thunder. The tumult of nature mingles so fantastically with the tumult of projectiles that flaming bombs and forked flashes cut the air in company, and the noise from the mortars alternates with the noise from the clouds.

From bridge to bridge and back again a gloomy eyed figure stalks, as it has stalked the whole night long with the restlessness of a wild animal. Plastered with mud, and dribbling with rain-water, it bears no resemblance to anything dignified or official. The figure is that of NAPOLEON, urging his multitudes over.

By daylight the great mass of the men is across the water. At six the rain ceases, the mist uncovers the face of the sun, which bristles on the helmets and bayonets of the French. A hum of amazement rises from the Austrian hosts who turn staring faces southward and perceive what has happened and the columns of their enemies standing to arms on the same side of the stream with themselves, and preparing to turn their left wing.

NAPOLEON rides along the front of his forces, which now spread out upon the plain, and are ranged in order of battle.

Dumb Show ends, and the point of view changes.

SCENE III

THE FIELD OF WAGRAM

The battlefield is now viewed reversely, from the windows of a mansion at Wolkersdorf, to the rear of the Austrian position. The aspect of the windows is nearly south, and the prospect includes the plain of the Marchfeld, with

the isled Danube and Lobau in the extreme distance Ten miles to the south-west, rightwards, the fair summit of the tower of St Stephen, Vienna, appears On the middle left stands the compact plateau of Wagram so regularly shaped as to seem as if constructed by art On the extreme left the July sun has lately risen

Inside the room we discovered the EMPEROR FRANCIS and some household officers in attendance, with the War Minister and Secretaries at a table at the back Through open doors can be seen in an outer apartment adjutants, equerries, aides and other military men An officer in waiting enters

OFFICER

Hooded by night the French have shifted, sire,
And much revised their stations of the eve
By thwait and wheeling moves upon our left,
And on our centre—projects unforeseen
Till near accomplished

FRANCIS

But I am advised
By oral message that the Archduke Charles,
Since the sharp strife last night, has mended, too,
His earlier dispositions, stiffened files,
Sped iron orders to the Archduke John
To bring in swiftest marches all his might,
And pounce with heavy impact on the French
From nigh their rear?

OFFICER

'Tis good, sire, such a swoop
Will raise an obstacle to their retreat
And refuge in the fastness of the isle,
And show this victory-googed adventurer
That striking with a river in his rear
Is not the safest tactic to be played
Against an Austrian front equipt like ours!

The EMPEROR FRANCIS and others scrutinize through their glasses the positions and movements of the Austrian divisions which appear on the plain as pale masses emitting flashes from arms and helmets under the July rays, and reaching from the Tower of Neusiedel on the left past Wagram into the village of Stammersdorf on the right Beyond their lines are spread out the darker hued French, almost parallel to the Austrians

FRANCIS

Those moving masses toward the right I deem
The forces of Klenau and Kollowrath,

Sent to support Prince John of Lichtenstein
In his attack that way ?

An interval

Now that they've gained
The right there, why is not the attack begun ?

OFFICER

They are beginning on the left wing, sire

The EMPEROR resumes his glass and beholds bodies of men descending from the hills by Neusiedel, and crossing the Russbach river towards the French—a movement which has been going on for some time

Meanwhile the French stride stoutly on our midst !

FRANCIS (turning thither)

Where we are weakest ! It surpasses me
To understand why was our centre thinned
To pillar up our right already strong,
Where nought is doing, while our left assault
Stands ill-supported ?

Time passes in silence

Yes, it is so See,
The enemy strikes Rossenberg in flank,
Compelling him to fall behind the Russbach !

The EMPEROR gets excited, and his face perspires At length he cannot watch through his glass and walks up and down

Penned useless here my nerves annoy my sight !
Inform me what you note —I should opine
The Wagram height behind impregnable ?

Another silence, broken by the distant roar of the guns

OFFICER (at his glass)

Klenau and Kollowrath are pounding on !
To turn the enemy's left with our strong right
Is, after all, a plan that works out well
Hiller and Lichtenstein conjoin therein

FRANCIS

I hear from thence appalling cannonades

OFFICER

'Tis theirs, your Majesty Now we shall see
If the French read that there the danger lies

FRANCIS

I only pray that Bonaparte refrain
From spying danger there till all too late !

OFFICER (involuntarily, after a pause)

Ah, Heaven !

FRANCIS (turning sharply)

Well, well ? What changes figure now ?

OFFICER

They pierce our centre, sire ! We are, despite,
Not centrally so weak as I supposed
Well done, Bellegarde !

FRANCIS (glancing to the centre)

And what has he well done ?

OFFICER

The French in fierce fume broke through Adella's,
But Bellegarde, picking along the plain behind,
Has charged and driven them back disorderly
The Archduke Charles bounds thither, as I shape,
In person to support him !

The EMPEROR returns to his spyglass, and they and others watch in
silence, sometimes the right of their front sometimes the centre

FRANCIS

It is so !

That right attack of ours spells victory,
And Austria's grand salvation ! (Time passes) Turn
your glass,
And closely scan Napoléon and his aides
Hand-galloping towards his centre-left
To strengthen it against the brave Bellegarde
Does your eye reach him ?—That white horse, alone
In front of those that move so rapidly

OFFICER

It does, sire, though my glass can conjure not
So cunningly as yours That horse must be

The famed Euphiates—him the Persian king
Sent Bonaparte as gift

A silence NAPOLÉON reaches a carriage that is moving across It bears
MASSÉNA who having received a recent wound, is unable to ride

FRANCIS

See, the white horse and horseman pause beside
A coach for some strange reason rolling there
That white-horsed aide—yes!—is Bonaparte,
By the aides hovering round
New war-wiles have been woded, we shall spell
Their purport soon enough! (An interval)

The French take heart
To stand to our battalions steadfastly,
And hold their ground, having the Emperor near!

Time passes An aide de camp enters

AIDE

The Archduke Charles is pierced in the shoulder, sire,
He strove too far in beating back the French
At Aderklaa, and was nearly ta'en
The wound's not serious—On our night we win,
And deem the battle ours

Enter another aide de camp

SECOND AIDE

Your Majesty,
We have borne them back through Aspern village-street
And Essling is recovered What counts more,
Their bridges to the rear we have nearly grasped,
And panic-struck they crowd the few left free,
Choking the track, with cries of "All is lost!"

FRANCIS

Then is the land delivered God be praised!

[Exeunt aides]

An interval, during which the EMPEROR and his companions again
remain anxiously at their glasses

There is a curious feature I discern
To have come upon the battle On our right
We gain ground rapidly, towards the left

We lose it and the unjudged consequence
Is that the armies' whole commingling mass
Moves like a monstrous wheel I like it not !

Enter another aide de-camp

THIRD AIDE

Our left wing, sue, recedes before Davout,
Whom nothing can withstand ! Two corps he threw
Across the Russbach up to Neusiedel,
While he himself assailed the place in front
Of the divisions one pressed on and on,
Till lodged atop They would have been hurled back——

FRANCIS

But how goes it with us in sum ? pray say !

THIRD AIDE

We have been battered off the eastern side
Of Wagiam plateau

FRANCIS

Where's the Archduke John ?
Why comes he not ? One man of his here now
Were worth a host anon And yet he tames !

[Exit third aide

Time passes, while they reconnoitre the field with strained eyes

Our centie-right, it seems, round Neusiedel,
Is being repulsed ! May the kind Heaven forbid
That Hesse Homberg should be yielding there !

The Minister in attendance comes forward and the EMPEROR consults
him, then walking up and down in silence Another aide de camp enters

FOURTH AIDE

Sue, Neusiedel has just been wrenched from us,
And the French right is on the Wagiam crest,
Nordmann has fallen, and Veczay Hesse Homberg,
Warteachben, Muger—almost all our best—
Bleed more or less profusely !

A gloomy silence Exit fourth aide Ten minutes pass Enter an
officer in waiting

FRANCIS

What guns are those that groan from Wagiam height?

OFFICER

Alas, Davout's! I have climbed the roof-top, sire,
And there discerned the truth

Cannonade continues A long interval of suspense The EMPEROR
returns to his glass

FRANCIS

A part of it!
There seems to be a grim, concerted lunge
By the whole strength of France upon our right,
Centre, and left wing simultaneously!

OFFICER

Most viciously upon the centre, sire,
If I mistook not, hard by Sussenbrunn,
The assault is led by Bonaparte in person,
Who shows himself with marvellous recklessness
Yet like a phantom-fiend receives no hurt

FRANCIS (still gazing)

Ha! Now the Archduke Charles has seen the intent,
And taken steps against it Sussenbrunn
Must be the threatened thing (Silence) What an
advance!—
Straight hitherward Our centre guides them—
Surely they'll not persist? Who heads that charge?

OFFICER

They say Macdonald, sire

FRANCIS

Meagrest remains
Will there be soon of those in that advance!
We are burning them to bones by our hot fire
They are almost circumscribed if fully so
The battle's ours! What's that behind them, eh?

OFFICER

Their last reserves, that they may feed the front,
And sterilize our hope!

FRANCIS

Yes, their reserve—
Dragoons and cuirassiers—charge in support
You see their metal gleaming as they come
Well, it is neck or nothing for them now !

OFFICER

It's nothing, sire Their charge of cavalry
Has desperately failed

FRANCIS

Their foot press on,
However, with a battery in front
Which deals the foulest damage done us yet
(Time passes)
They *are* effecting lodgment, after all
Who would have reckoned on't—our men so firm !
Re enter first aide-de camp

FIRST AIDE

The Archduke Charles retreats, your Majesty,
And the issue wears a dirty look just now

FRANCIS (gloomily)

Yes I have seen the signs for some good while
But he retreats with blows, and orderly

Time passes till the sun has rounded far towards the west The features
of the battle now materially change The French have regained Aspern and
Essling, the Austrian army is doubled back from the Danube and from the
heights of Wagram, which, as viewed from Wolkersdorf face the afternoon
shine, the French established thereon glittering in the rays

FRANCIS (choking a sigh)

The turn has passed We are worsted, but not whelmed !
The French advance is laboured, and but slow
—This might have been another-coloured day
If but the Archduke John had joined up promptly,
Yet still he lags !

ANOTHER OFFICER (lately entered)

He's just now coming, sire
His columns glimmer in the Frenchmen's rear,
Past Siebenbrunn's and Loebensdorf's smoked hills

FRANCIS (impatiently)

Ay—coming *now* ! Why could he not be *come* !

(They watch intently)

We can see nothing of that side from here

Enter a general officer, who speaks to the Minister at the back of the room

MINISTER (coming forward)

Your Majesty, I now must needs suggest,
Pursuant to conclusions reached this morn,
That since the front and flower of all our force
Is seen receding to the Bisamberg,
These walls no longer yield safe shade for you,
Or facile outlook Scouts returning say
Either Davout, or Bonaparte himself,
With the mid-columns of his forward corps,
Will bear up hitherward in fierce pursuit,
And may intrude beneath this very roof
Not yet, I think, it may not be to-night,
But we should stand prepared

FRANCIS

If we must go
We'll go with a good grace, unfeignedly !
Who knows to-morrow may not see regained
What we have lost to-day ?

Re-enter fourth aide de camp

FOURTH AIDE (breathlessly)

The Archduke John,
Discerning our main musters in retreat,
Abandons an advance that throws on him
The enemy's whole brunt if he bear on

FRANCIS

Alas for his devotion ! Let us go
Such weight of sadness as we shoulder now
Will wring us down to sleep in stall or sty,
If even that be found ! Think ! Bonaparte,
By reckless riskings of his life and limb,
Has turned the steelyard of our strength to-day,

Whilst I have idled here ! May brighter times
Attend the cause of Europe far in Spain,
And British blood flow not, as ours, in vain !

[Re-enters the EMPEROR FRANCIS, ministers, officers and attendants.
The night comes, and the scene is obscured

SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF TALAVERA

It is the same month and weather as in the preceding scene
Talavera town, on the river Tagus, is at the extreme right of the foreground, a mountain range on the extreme left

The allied army under SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY stretches between—the English on the left the Spanish on the right—part holding a hill to the left centre of the scene divided from the mountains by a valley and part holding a redoubt to the right-centre This army of more than fifty thousand all told of which twenty two thousand only are English has its back to the spectator

Beyond in a wood of olive oak and cork, are the fifty to sixty thousand French facing the spectator and the allies Their right includes a strong battery upon a hill which fronts the one on the English left

Behind all, the heights of Salinas close the prospect the small river Alberche flowing at their foot from left to right into the Tagus which advances in foreshortened perspective to the town at the right front corner of the scene as aforesaid

DUMB SHOW

The hot and dusty July afternoon having turned to twilight shady masses of men start into motion from the French position come towards the foreground silently ascend the hill on the left of the English and assail the latter in a violent outburst of fire and lead Their nearly gain possession of the hill ascended

CHORUS OF RUMOURS (aerial music)

*Talavera tongues it as ten o' the night-time
Now come Ruffin's slaughterers surging upward,
Backed by bold Vilatte's ! From the vale Lapsisse, too,
Darkly outswells there !—*

*Down the vague veiled incline the English fling them,
Bended bayonets prodding opponents backward
So the first furce charge of the olden Frenchmen
England repels there !*

Having fallen back into the darkness the French presently reascend in yet larger masses The high square knapsack which every English foot soldier carries and his shako and its tuft outline themselves against the dim light as the ranks stand awaiting the shock

CHORUS OF RUMOURS

*Pushing spread they '—shout as they reach the summit '—
Strength and stir new pruned in their plump battalions
Puffs of barbed flame blown on the lines opposing
Higher and higher*

*There those hold them mute, though at speaking distance—
Mute, while clicking flints, and the crash of volleys
Whelm the weighted gloom with immense distraction
Pending their fire*

*Fronting heads, helms, brows can each ranksman read there,
Epaulettes, hot cheeks, and the shining eyeball,
(Called a truce from gloom by the fleeting pan-flash)
Pressing them nigher '*

The French again fall back in disorder into the hollow, and LAPISSE draws off on the right. As the sinking sound of the muskets tells what has happened the English raise a shout

CHORUS OF PITIES

*Thus the dim nocturnal embroil of conflict
Closes with the roar of receding gun-fire
Harness loosened then, and their day-long strenuous
Temper unbending,*

*Worn-out lines lie down where they late stood staunchly—
Cloaks around them rolled—by the bivouac embers
There at dawn to stake in the dynasts' death game
All, till the ending '*

SCENE V

THE SAME

DUMB SHOW (continued)

The morning breaks. There is another murderous attempt to dislodge the English from the hill, the assault being pressed with a determination that excites the admiration of the English themselves.

The French are seen descending into the valley, crossing it, and climbing it on the English side under the fire of HILL's whole division, all to no purpose. In their retreat they leave behind them on the slopes nearly two thousand lying.

The day advances to noon and the air trembles in the intense heat. The combat flags and is suspended.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*What do I see but thirsty, throbbing bands
 From these inimic hosts defiling down
 In homely need towards the little stream
 That parts their enmities, and drinking there !
 They get to grasping hands across the rill,
 Sealing their sameness as earth's sojourners —
 What more could plead the wryness of the times
 Than such unstudied piteous pantomimes !*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*It is only that Life's queer mechanics chance to work out in
 this grotesque shape just now The groping tentativeness of an
 Immanent Will (as grey old Years describes it) cannot be asked to
 learn logic at this time of day ! The spectacle of Its instruments,
 set to riddle one another through, and then to drink together in peace
 and concord, is where the humour comes in, and makes the play
 worth seeing !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Come, Sprite, don't carry your romes too far, or you may
 wake up the Unconscious Itself, and tempt It to let all the gory
 clock-work of the show run down to spite me !*

The drums roll, and the men of the two nations part from their comradeship at the Alberche brook the dark masses of the French army assembling anew SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY has seated himself on a mound that commands a full view of the contested hill and remains there motionless a long time When the French form for battle he is seen to have come to a conclusion He mounts, gives his orders, and the aides ride off

The French advance steadily through the sultry atmosphere, the skirmishers in front, and the columns after moving, yet seemingly motionless Their eighty cannon peal out and their shots mow every space in the line of them Up the great valley and the terraces of the hill whose fame is at that moment being woven, comes VIIATTE, boring his way with foot and horse, and RUFFIN'S men following behind

According to the order given, the Twenty-third Light Dragoons and the German Hussars advance at a chosen moment against the head of these columns On the way they disappear

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Why this bedevilment ? What can have chanced ?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*It so befalls that as their chargers near
 The inimical wall of flesh with its iron frise,*

*A treacherous chasm uptrips them zealous men
And docile horses roll to dismal death
And horrid mutilation*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Those who live
Even now advance ! I'll see no more Relate*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*Yes, those pant on Then further Frenchmen cross,
And Polish Lancers, and Westphalian Horse,
Who ring around these luckless Islanders,
And sweep them down like reeds by the river brink
In scouring floods, till scarce a man remains*

Meanwhile on the British right SEBASTIAN'S corps has precipitated itself in column against GENERAL CAMPBELL'S division the division of LAPISSE against the centre, and at the same time the hill on the English left is again assaulted The English and their allies are pressed sorely here the bellowing battery tearing lanes through their masses

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR (continuing)

*The French reserves of foot and horse now on,
Smiting the Islanders in breast and brain
Till their mud-huns are shattered Now there ticks
The moment of the crisis, now the next,
Which brings the turning stroke*

SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY sends down the Forty eighth regiment under COLONEL DONLLAN to support the wasting troops It advances amid those retreating opening to let them pass

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR (continuing)

*Then pales, enerv'd,
The hitherto unflinching enemy !
Lapisse is pierced to death, the flagging French
Decline into the hollows whence they came
The too exhausted English and reduced
Lack strength to follow — Now the western sun,
Conning with unmoved visage quick and dead,
Gilds horsemen slackening, and footmen stilled,
Till all around breathes drowsed hostility
Last, the swealed herbage lifts a leering light,
And flames traverse the field, and hurt and slain
Opposed, opposers, in a common plight
Are scorched together on the dusk champaign*

The fire dies down, and darkness enwraps the scene

SCENE VI

BRIGHTON THE ROYAL PAVILION

It is the birthday dinner party of the PRINCE OF WALES. In the splendidly decorated banquetting room such tables spread with gold and silver plate and having artificial fountains in their midst.

Seated at the tables are the PRINCE himself as host—rosy, well curled, and affable—the DUKES OF YORK, CLARENCE, KENT, SUSSEX, CUMBERLAND and CAMBRIDGE, with many noblemen, including LORDS HAMPFORD, BERKELEY, EGREMONT, CHICHESTER, DUDLEY, SAY AND SELE, SOUTHAMPTON, HEATHFIELD, ESKINE, KEITH, C. SOMERSET, G. CAMPDENISH, R. SEYMOUR, and others, SIR C. POLE, SIR E. G. DR. CALSPING, MR. SHERIDAN, Generals, Colonels, and Admirals and the REV. MR. SCOTT.

The PRINCE'S band plays in the adjoining room. The banquet is drawing to its close and a boisterous conversation is in progress.

Enter CORONEL BROOMFIELD with a dispatch for the PRINCE who looks it over amid great excitement in the company. In a few moments silence is called.

PRINCE OF WALES

I have the joy, my lords and gentlemen,
To rouse you with the just imported tidings
From General Wellesley through Lord Castlereagh
Of a vast victory (noisy cheers) over the French in Spain.
The place—called Talavera de la Reyna
(If I pronounce it rightly)—long unknown,
Wears now the crest and blazonry of fame! (Cheers)
The heads and chief contents of the dispatch
I read you as succinctly as I can. (Cheers)

SHERIDAN (singing sotto voce)

"Now foreign foemen die and fly,
Dammy, we'll drink little England dry!"

The PRINCE reads the parts of the dispatch that describe the battle, amid intermittent cheers.

PRINCE OF WALES (continuing)

Such is the substance of the news received,
Which, after Wagiam, strikes us genially
As sudden sunrise through befogged night shades!

SHERIDAN (privately)

Best, that's good, sir! You are a poet born, while the
rest of us are but made, and bad at that.

The health of the army in Spain is drunk with acclamations.

PRINCE OF WALES (continuing)

In this achievement we, alas ! have lost
 Too many ! Yet such blanks must ever be —
 Mackenzie, Langworth, Beckett of the Guards,
 Have fallen of ours, while of the enemy
 Generals Lapisse and Moilot are laid low —
 Drink to their memories !

They drink in silence

Other news, my friends,
 Received to-day is of like hopeful kind
 The Great War-Expedition to the Scheldt (cheers)
 Which lately sailed, has found a favouring wind,
 And by this hour has touched its destined shores
 The enterprise will soon be hot aglow,
 The invaders making first the Cadsand coast,
 And then descending on the Walcheren Isle
 But items of the next step are withheld
 Till later days, from obvious policy (Cheers)

Faint throbbing sounds like the notes of violoncellos and contrabassos
 reach the ear from some building without as the speaker pauses

In worthy emulation of us here
 The county holds to night a birthday ball,
 Which flames with all the fashion of the town
 I have been asked to patronize their revel,
 And sup with them, and likewise you, my guests
 We have good reason, with such news to bear !
 Thither we haste and join our loyal friends,
 And stir them with this live intelligence
 Of our staunch regiments on the Spanish plains

(Applause)

With them we'll now knit hands and beat the ground,
 And bring in dawn as we whirl round and round !
 There are some fair ones in their set to-night,
 And such we need here in our bachelor-plight (Applause)

The PRINCE his brothers, and a large proportion of the other Pavilion
 guests, swagger out in the direction of the Castle assembly rooms adjoining
 and the deserted banquetting hall grows dark In a few moments the back of
 the scene opens, revealing the assembly-rooms behind

SCENE VII

THE SAME THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS

The Rooms are lighted with candles in brass chandeliers, and a dance is in full movement to the strains of a string band. A signal is given shortly after the clock has struck eleven, by MR FOKRH, Master of Ceremonies

FORTH

His Royal Highness comes, though somewhat late,
But never too late for welcome! (Applause) Dancers,
stand,

That we may do fit homage to the Prince
Who soon may shine our country's gracious king

After a brief stillness a commotion is heard at the door, the band strikes up the National air, and the PRINCE enters, accompanied by the rest of the visitors from the Pavilion. The guests who have been temporarily absent now crowd in, till there is hardly space to stand

PRINCE OF WALES (wiping his face and whispering to Sheridan)

What shall I say to fit their feelings here?
Damn me, that other speech has stumped me quite!

SHERIDAN (whispering)

If heat be evidence of loyalty—

PRINCE OF WALES

If what?

SHERIDAN

If heat be evidence of loyalty,
Et cætera—something quaint like that might please 'em

PRINCE OF WALES (to the company)

If heat be evidence of loyalty,
This room affords it truly without question,
If heat be not, then its accompaniment
Most surely 'tis to-night. The news I bring,
Good ladies, friends, and gentlemen, perchance
You have divined already? That our aims—
Engaged to thwart Napoleon's tyranny
Over the jaunty, jocund land of Spain
Even to the highest apex of our strength—
Are rayed with victory! (Cheers) Lengthy was the strife

And fierce, and hot, and sore the suffering,
 But proudly we endured it, and shall hear,
 No doubt, the tale of its far consequence
 Eie many days I'll read the details sent (Cheers)

He reads again from the dispatch amid more cheering the ball room
 guests crowding round When he has done he answers questions, then
 continuing

Meanwhile our interest is, if possible,
 As keenly waked elsewhere Into the Scheldt
 Some forty thousand bayonets and swords,
 And twoscore ships o' the line, with frigates, sloops,
 And gunboats sixty more, make headway now,
 Bleaching the waters with their bellying sails,
 Or maybe they already anchor there,
 And that the level ooze of Walcheren shore
 Rings with the voices of that landing host
 In every twang of British dialect,
 Clamorous to loosen fettered Europe's chain! (Cheers)

A NOBLE LORD (aside to Sheridan)

Prinny's outpouring tastes suspiciously like your brew, Sheridan
 I'll be damned if it is his own concoction How d'ye sell it a
 gallon?

SHERIDAN

I don't deal that way nowadays I give the recipe, and
 charge a duty on the gauging It is more artistic, and saves
 trouble

The company proceed to the supper-rooms, and the ball room sinks into
 solitude

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*So they pass on Let be!—But what is this—
 A moan?—all frailly floating from the east
 To usward, even from the forenamed isle? . .
 Would I had not broke nescience, to inspect
 A world so ill-contrived!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*But since thou hast
 We'll hasten to the isle, and thou'lt behold—
 Such as it is—the scene its coasts enfold*

SCENE VIII

WALCHEREN

A marshy island at the mouth of the Scheldt lit by the low sunshine of an evening in late summer. The horizontal rays from the west lie in yellow sheaves across the vapours that the day's heat has drawn from the sweating soil. Sour grasses grow in places and strange fishy smells now warm now cold pass along. Brass-hued and opalescent bubbles compounded of many gases, rise where passing feet have trodden the damper spots. At night the place is the haunt of the Jack-lantern.

DUMB SHOW

A vast army is encamped here, and in the open spaces are infantry on parade—skeletoned men, some flushed, some shivering, who are kept moving because it is dangerous to stay still. Every now and then one falls down and is carried away to a hospital with no roof, where he is laid bedless on the ground.

In the distance soldiers are digging graves for the funerals which are to take place after dark, delayed till then that the sight of so many may not drive the living melancholy-mad. Faint noises are heard in the air.

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*What storm is this of souls dissolved in sighs,
And what the dingy doom it signifies?*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

We catch a lamentation shaped thuswise

CHORUS OF PITIES (aerial music)

*"We who withstood the blasting blaze of war
When marshalled by the gallant Moore awhile,
Beheld the grazing death-bolt with a smile,
Closed combat edge to edge and bore to bore,
Now rot upon this Isle!"*

*"The ever wan morass, the dune, the bleak
Sandweed, and tepid pool, and putrid smell,
Emaciate purpose to a fractious fear,
Beckon the body to its last low cell—
A chunk no chart will tell*

*"O ancient Delta, where the fen lights flut'
Ignoble sediment of loftier lands,*

*Thy humour clings about our hearts and hands
And solves us to its softness, till we sit
As we were part of it*

*"Such force as fever leaves is maddened now,
With tidings trickling in from day to day
Of others' differing fortunes, wondering how
They yield their lives to baulk a tyrant's sway—
Yield them not vainly, they !*

*"In champagnes green and purple, far and near,
In town and thorpe where quiet spire-cocks turn,
Through vales, by rocks, beside the brooding burn
Echoes the aggressor's arrogant career,
And we pent pitiless here !*

*"Here, where each creeping day the creeping file
Draws past with shouldered comrades score on score,
Bearing them to their lightless last asile,
Where weary wave-wails from the clammy shore
Will reach their ears no more*

*"We might have fought, and had we died, died well,
Even if in dynasts' discords not our own,
Our death-spot some sad haunter might have shown,
Some tongue have asked our sires or sons to tell
The tale of how we fell,*

*"But such bechanced not Like the mist we fade,
No lustrous lines engrave in story we,
Our country's chiefs, for their own fames afraid,
Will leave our names and fates by this pale sea
To perish silently !"*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Why must ye echo as mechanic mimes
These mortal minions' bootless cadences,
Played on the stops of their anatomy
As is the mewling music on the strings
Of yonder ship-masts by the unweeting wind,
Or the frail tune upon this withering sedge
That holds its papery blades against the gale ?*

*—Men pass to dark corruption, at the best,
 Ere I can count five score these why not now?—
 The Immanent Shaper builds Its beings so
 Whether ye sigh their sighs with them or no!*

The night fog enwraps the isle and the dying English army

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I

PARIS A BALLROOM IN THE HOUSE OF CAMBACÉRÈS

The many-candled saloon at the ARCH CHANCELLOR'S is visible through a draped opening and a crowd of masked dancers in fantastic costumes revolve sway, and intermingle to the music that proceeds from an alcove at the further end of the same apartment. The front of the scene is a withdrawing-room of smaller size, now vacant save for the presence of one sombre figure, that of NAPOLÉON seated, and apparently watching the moving masquerade.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Napoleon even now unbraces not
 From stress of state affairs, which hold him grave
 Through revels that might win the King of SpLEN
 To toe a measure! I would speak with him*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Speak if thou wilt whose speech nor mans nor mends!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (into Napoleon's ear)

*Why thus and thus Napoleon? Can it be
 That Wagram with its glories, shocks, and shames,
 Still leaves athirst the palate of thy pride?*

NAPOLÉON (answering as in soliloquy)

The trustless, tumorous lease of human life
 Warns me to hedge in my diplomacy
 The sooner, then, the safer! Av, this eve,
 This very night, will I take steps to rid
 My morrows of the weird contingencies
 That vision round and make one hollow-eyed
 The unexpected, lurid death of Lannes—

Rigid as iron, reaped down like a straw—
 Tiptoed Assassination haunting round
 In unthought thoroughfares, the near success
 Of Staps the madman, argue to forbid
 The riskful blood of my previsioned line
 And potence for dynastic empery
 To linger vialled in my veins alone
 Perhaps within this very house and hour,
 Under an innocent mask of Love or Hope,
 Some enemy queues my ways to coffin me
 When at the first clash of the late campaign,
 A bold belief in Austria's star prevailed,
 Their pulsed quick pants of expectation round
 Among the cowering kings, that too well told
 What would have fared had I been overthrown !
 So, I must send down shoots to future time
 Who'll plant my standard and my story there,
 And a way opens—Better I had not
 Bespoke a wife from Alexander's house
 Not there now lies my look But done is done !

The dance ends and masks enter, BERTHIER among them NAPOLÉON
 beckons to him, and he comes forward

God send you find amid this motley crew
 Follies enough, friend Berthier—eh ?
 My thoughts have worn oppressive shades despite such
 What scandals of me do they bandy here ?
 These close disguises render women bold—
 Their shames being of the light, not of the thing—
 And your sagacity has garnered much,
 I make no doubt, of ill and good report,
 That marked our absence from the capital ?

BERTHIER

Methinks, your Majesty, the enormous tale
 Of your campaign, like Aaron's serpent-rod
 Has swallowed up the smaller of its kind
 Some speak, 'tis true, in counterpoise thereto
 Of English deeds by Talavera town,
 Though blurred by their exploit at Walcheren,
 And all its crazy, class follies

NAPOLÉON

Yet was the exploit well featured in design,
 Large in idea, and imaginative,
 I had not deemed the blinkered English folk
 So capable of view Their fate contrived
 To place an idiot at the helm of it,
 Who marred its working, else it had been hard
 If things had not gone seriously for us
 —But see, a lady saunters hitherward
 Whose gait proclaims her Madame Metternich,
 One that I fain would speak with

NAPOLÉON rises and crosses the room towards a lady masker who has just appeared in the opening BERTHIER draws off and the EMPFANG uncereemoniously taking the lady's arm brings her forward to a chair and sits down beside her as dancing is resumed

MADAME METTERNICH

In a flash

I recognized you, sire, as who would not
 The bearer of such deep-delved character?

NAPOLÉON

The devil, madame, take your piercing eyes!
 It's hard I cannot prosper in a game
 That every coxcomb plays successfully
 —So here you are still, though your loving lord
 Dispoits him at Vienna?

MADAME METTERNICH

Paris, true,

Still holds me, though in quiet, save to-night,
 When I have been expressly prayed come hither,
 Or I had not left home

- NAPOLÉON

I sped that prayer!—

I have a wish to put a case to you,
 Wherein a woman's judgment, such as yours,
 May be of signal service (He lapses into reverie)

MADAME METTERNICH

Well? The case—

NAPOLÉON

Is marriage—mine

MADAME METTERNICH

It is beyond me, sire !

NAPOLÉON

You glean that I have decided to dissolve
(Pursuant to monitions murmured long)
My union with the present Empress—formed
Without the Church's due authority ?

MADAME METTERNICH

Vaguely And that light tentatives have winged
Betwixt your Majesty and Russia's court,
To moot that one of their Grand-Duchesses
Should be your Empress-wife Nought else I know

NAPOLÉON

There have been such approachings , more, worse luck
Last week Champagny wrote to Alexander
Asking him for his sister—yes or no

MADAME METTERNICH

What "worse luck" lies in that, your Majesty,
If severance from the Empress Josephine
Be fixed unalterably ?

NAPOLÉON

This worse luck lies there
If your Archduchess, Marie Louise the fair,
Would straight accept my hand, I'd offer it,
And throw the other over Faith, the Tsar
Has shown such backwardness in answering me,
Time meanwhile trotting, that I have ample ground
For such withdrawal —Madame, now, again,
Will your Archduchess marry me or no ?
That is, will her good sire assent thereto ?

MADAME METTERNICH

Your sudden questions quite confound my sense ?
It is impossible to answer them

NAPOLÉON

Well, madame, now I'll put it to you thus
Were you in the Archduchess Marie's place
Would you accept my hand—and heart therewith?

MADAME METTERNICH

I should refuse you—most assuredly!¹

NAPOLÉON (laughing roughly)

Ha ha! That's frank And devilish cruel too!
—Well, write to your husband Ask him what he thinks,
And let me know

MADAME METTERNICH

Indeed, sire, why should I?
There goes the Ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg,
Successor to my spouse He's now the groove
And proper conduit of diplomacy
Through whom to broach this matter to his Court

NAPOLÉON

Do you, then, broach it through him, madame, pray,
Now, here, to-night

MADAME METTERNICH

I will, informally,
To humour you, on this recognizance
That you leave not the business in my hands,
But clothe your project in official guise
Through him to-morrow, so safeguarding me
From foolish seeming, as the babbler forth
Of a fantastic and unheard of dream

NAPOLÉON

I'll send Eugène to him, as you suggest
Meanwhile prepare him Make your stand-point this
Children are needful to my dynasty,
And if one woman cannot mould them for me,
Why, then, another must

[Exit NAPOLÉON abruptly]

Dancing continues Madame METTERNICH sits on, musing Enter
SCHWARZENBERG

¹ So Madame Metternich to her husband in reporting this interview But who shall say!

MADAME METTERNICH

The Emperor has just left me We have tapped
This theme and that, his Empress and—his next
Ay, so! Now, guess you anything?

SCHWARZENBERG

Of her?

No more than that the stock of Romanoff
Will not supply the spruce commodity

MADAME METTERNICH

And that the would-be customer turns toe
To our shop in Vienna

SCHWARZENBERG

Marvellous,

And comprehensible but as the dream
Of Delaborde, of which I have lately heard
It will not work!—What think you, madame, on't?

MADAME METTERNICH

That it will work, and is as good as wrought!—
I break it to you thus, at his request
In brief time Prince Eugène will wait on you,
And make the formal offer in his name

SCHWARZENBERG

Which I can but receive *ad referendum*,
And shall initially make clear as much,
Disclosing not a glimpse of my own mind!
Meanwhile you make good Metternich aware?

MADAME METTERNICH

I write this midnight, that amaze may pitch
To coolness ere your messenger arrives

SCHWARZENBERG

This radiant revelation flicks a gleam
On many circling things!—the courtesies
Which graced his bearing towards our officers
Amid the tumults of the late campaign,

His wish for peace with England, his affront
 At Alexander's tedious-timed reply
 Well, it will thrust a thorn in Russia's side,
 If I err not, whatever else betide! [Exit

The maskers surge into the foreground of the scene, and their motions become more and more fantastic. A strange gloom begins and intensifies, until only the high lights of their grinning figures are visible. These also, with the whole ball room, gradually darken, and the music softens to silence.

SCENE II

PARIS THE TUILERIES

The evening of the next day. A saloon of the Palace, with folding doors communicating with a dining room. The doors are flung open revealing on the dining table an untouched dinner, NAPOLEON and JOSEPHINE rising from it, and DE BAUSSET chamberlain in-waiting, pacing up and down. The EMPRESS and EMPRESS come forward into the saloon the latter pale and distressed, and putting her eyes with her handkerchief.

The doors are closed behind them, a page brings in coffee, NAPOLEON signals to him to leave. JOSEPHINE goes to pour out the coffee but NAPOLEON pushes her aside and pours it out himself looking at her in a way which causes her to sink cowering into a chair like a frightened animal.

JOSEPHINE

I see my doom, my friend, upon your face!

NAPOLEON

You see me bored by Cambacères' ball

JOSEPHINE

It means divorce!—a thing more terrible
 Than carrying elsewhere the dalliances
 That formerly were mine. I kicked at that,
 But now agree, as I for long have done,
 To any infidelities of act
 May I be yours in name!

NAPOLEON

My mind must bend
 To other things than our domestic pettings
 The Empire orbs above our happiness,
 And 'tis the Empire dictates this divorce

I reckon on your courage and calm sense
To breast with me the law's formalities,
And get it through before the year has flown

JOSÉPHINE

But are you *really* going to part from me ?
O no, no, my dear husband, no, in truth,
It cannot be my Love will serve me so !

NAPOLÉON

I mean but mere divorcement, as I said,
On simple grounds of sapient sovereignty

JOSÉPHINE

But nothing have I done save good to you —
Since the fond day we wedded into one
I never even have *thought* you jot of harm !
Many the happy junctures when you have said
I stood as guardian-angel over you,
As your Dame Fortune, too, and endless things
Of such-like pretty tenour—yes, you have !
Then how can you so gild against me now ?
You had not picked me with it much of late,
And so I hoped and hoped the ugly spectre
Had been laid dead and still

NAPOLÉON (impatiently)

I tell you, dear,
The thing's decreed, and even the princess chosen

JOSÉPHINE

Ah—so—the princess chosen ! I surmise
It is none else than the Grand-Duchess Anne
Gossip was right—though I would not believe
She's young, but no great beauty !—Yes, I see
Her silly, soulless eyes and horrid hair,
In which new gauderies you'll forget sad me !

NAPOLÉON

Upon my soul you are childish, Joséphine
A woman of your years to pout it so !—
I say it's not the Tsar's Grand-Duchess Anne.

JOSÉPHINE

Some other Fair, then You whose name can nod
The flower of all the world's virginity
Into your bed, will well take care of that !
(Spitefully) She may not have a child, friend, after all

NAPOLÉON (dryly)

You hope she won't, I know !—But don't forget
Madame Walewska did, and had she shown
Such cleverness as yours, poor little fool,
Her withered husband might have been displaced,
And her boy made my heir —Well, let that be
The severing parchments will be signed by us
Upon the fifteenth, prompt

JOSÉPHINE

What—I have to sign
My putting away upon the fifteenth next ?

NAPOLÉON

Ay—both of us

JOSÉPHINE (falling on her knees)

So far advanced—so far !
Fixed ?—for the fifteenth ? O I do implore you
My very dear one, by our old, old love,
By my devotion, don't, don't cast me off
Now, after these long years !

NAPOLÉON

Heavens, how you jade me !
Must I repeat that I don't cast you off,
We merely formally arrange divorce—
We live and love, but call ourselves divided

A silence

JOSÉPHINE (with sudden calm)

Very well Let it be I must submit ! (Rises)

NAPOLÉON

And this much likewise you must promise me,
To act in the formalities thereof
As if you shaped them of your own free will

JOSÉPHINE

How can I—when no freewill's left in me ?

NAPOLÉON

You are a willing party—do you hear ?

JOSÉPHINE (quivering)

I hardly—can—bear this !—It is—too much
For a poor weak and broken woman's strength !
But—but I yield !—I am so helpless now ,
I give up all—ay, kill me if you will,
I won't cry out !

NAPOLÉON

And one thing further still,
You'll help me in my marriage overtures
To win the Duchess—Austrian Marie she,—
Concentring all your force to forward them

JOSÉPHINE

It is the—last humiliating blow !—
I cannot—O, I will not !

NAPOLLON (fiercely)

But you *shall* !

And from your past experience you may know
That what I say I mean !

JOSÉPHINE (breaking into sobs)

O my dear husband—do not make me—don't !
If you but cared for me—the hundredth part
Of how—I care for you, you could not be
So cruel as to lay this torture on me
It hurts me so !—it cuts me like a sword
Don't make me, dear ! Don't, will you ! O, O, O !

(She sinks down in a hysterical fit)

NAPOLÉON (calling)

Bausset !

Enter DE BAUSSET, Chamberlain in waiting

Bausset, come in and shut the door
Assist me here The Empress has fallen ill

Don't call for help We two can carry her
By the small private staircase to her rooms
Here—I will take her feet

~~They~~ lift JOSÉPHINE between them and carry her out Her moans die
away as they recede towards the stairs

Enter two servants, who remove coffee-service, readjust chairs etc

FIRST SERVANT

So, poor old girl, she's wailed her *Misere* *Mis*, as Mother
Church says I knew she was to get the sack ever since he
came back

SECOND SERVANT

Well, there will be a little civil huzzang, a little crowing and
cackling among the Bonapartes at the downfall of the Beauharnais
family at last, mark me there will! They've had their little
hour, as the poets say, and now 'twill be somebody else's turn
O it is droll! Well, Father Time is a great philosopher, if you
take him right Who is to be the new woman?

FIRST SERVANT

She that contains in her own corporation the necessary
particulars

SECOND SERVANT

And what may they be?

FIRST SERVANT

She must be young

SECOND SERVANT

Good She must The country must see to that

FIRST SERVANT

And she must be strong

SECOND SERVANT

Good again She must be strong The doctors will see to
that

FIRST SERVANT

And she must be fruitful as the vine

SECOND SERVANT

Ay, by God She must be fruitful as the vine That, Heaven
help him, he must see to himself, like the meanest multiplying
man in Paris

[Exeunt servants

Re-enter NAPOLÉON with his stepdaughter QUEEN HORTENSE

NAPOLÉON

Your mother is too rash and reasonless—
Wailing and fainting over statesmanship
Which is no personal caprice of mine,
But policy most painful—forced on me
By the necessities of this country's charge
Go to her, see if she be saner now,
Explain it to her once and once again,
And bring me word what impress you may make

HORTENSE goes out CHAMPAGNY is shown in

Champagny, I have something clear to say
Now, on our process after the divorce
The question of the Russian Duchess Anne
Was quite inept for further toying with
The years rush on, and I grow nothing younger
So I have made up my mind—committed me
To Austria and the Hapsburgs—good or ill!
It was the best, most practicable plunge,
And I have plunged it

CHAMPAGNY

Austria, say you, sire?
I reckoned that but as a scurrying dream!

NAPOLÉON

Well, so it was But such a pretty dream
That its own charm transfigured it to a notion,
That showed itself in time a sanity,
Which hardened in its turn to a resolve
As firm as any built by mortal mind—
The Emperor's consent must needs be won
But I foresee no difficulty there
The young Archduchess is a bright blond thing

By general story, and considering, too,
That her good mother childed seventeen times,
It will be hard if she can not produce
The modest one or two that I require

Enter DL BAUSSET with dispatches

DE BAUSSET

The courier, sire, from Petersburg is here,
And brings these letters for your Majesty

[ENTRÉ DE BAUSSET]

NAPOLÉON (after silently reading)

Ha-ha! It never rains unless it pours
Now I can have the other readily
The proverb hits me aptly "Well they do
Who doff the old love ere they don the new!"

(He glances again over the letter)

Yes, Caulaincourt now writes he has every hope
Of quick success in settling the alliance!
The Tsar is willing—even is anxious for it,
His sister's youth the single obstacle
The Empress-mother, hitherto against me,
Ambition-fired, verges on suave consent,
Likewise the whole Imperial family
What irony is all this to me now!
Time lately was when I had leapt thereat

CHAMPAGNY

You might, of course, sire, give th' Archduchess up
Seeing she looms uncertainly as yet,
While this does so no longer

NAPOLÉON

No—not I

My sense of my own dignity forbids
My watching the slow clocks of Muscovy!
Why have they dallied with my tentatives
In pompous silence since the Erfurt day?
—And Austria, too, affords a safer hope
The young Archduchess is much less a child
Than is the other, who, Caulaincourt says,
Will be incapable of motherhood
For six months yet or more—a grave delay

CHAMPAGNY

Your Majesty appears to have trimmed your sail
For Austria, and no more is to be said !

NAPOLÉON

Except that there's the house of Saxony
If Austria fail —Then, very well, Champagny,
Write you to Caulaincourt accordingly

CHAMPAGNY

I will, your Majesty

[Exit CHAMPAGNY]

Re enter QUELN HORTENSE

NAPOLÉON

Ah, dear Hortense,
How is your mother now ?

HORTENSE

Calm, quite calm, sire
I pledge me you need have no further fret
From her entreating tears She bids me say
That now, as always, she submits herself
With chastened dignity to circumstance,
And will descend, at notice, from your throne—
As in days earlier she ascended it—
In questionless obedience to your will
It was your hand that crowned her, let it be
Likewise your hand that takes her crown away
As for her children, we shall be but glad
To follow and withdraw ourselves with her,
The tenderest mother children ever knew,
From grandeurs that have brought no happiness !

NAPOLÉON (taking her hand)

But, Hortense, dear, it is not to be so !
You must stay with me, as I said before
Your mother, too, must keep her royal state,
Since no repudiation stains this need
Equal magnificence will orb her round
In aftertime as now A palace here,
A palace in the country, wealth to match,

A rank in order next my future wife's,
 And conference with me as my guest friend
 Now we will seek her—Eugene, you, and I—
 And make the project clear

[Exit NAPOLLON and HORTENSE]

The scene darkens and shuts

SCENE III

VIENNA A PRIVATE APARTMENT IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE

The EMPEROR FRANCIS discovered, paler than usual and somewhat flurried

Enter METTERNICH the Prime Minister—a thin lipped, long nosed man with inquisitive eyes

FRANCIS

I have been expecting you some minutes here,
 The thing that fronts us brooking brief delay—
 Well, what say you by now on this strange offer?

METTERNICH

My views remain the same, your Majesty
 The policy of peace that I have upheld,
 Both while in Paris and of late time here,
 Points to this step as heralding sweet balm
 And bandaged veins for our late crimsoned realm

FRANCIS

Agreed As monarch I perceive therein
 A happy doorway for my purposings
 It seems to guarantee the Hapsburg crown
 A quittance of distractions such as those
 That leave their shade on many a backward year!—
 There is, forsooth, a suddenness about it,
 And it would aid us had we clearly keyed
 The cryptologues of which the world has heard
 Between Napoleon and the Russian Court—
 Begun there with the selfsame motiving

METTERNICH

I would not, sire, one second ponder it
It was an obvious first crude cast-about
In the important reckoning of means
For his great end, a strong monarchic line
The more advanced the more it profits us,
For sharper, then, the quashing of such views,
And wreck of that conjunction in the aims
Of France and Russia, marked so much of late
As jeopardizing quiet neighbours' thrones

FRANCIS

If that be so, on the domestic side
There seems no bar Speaking as father solely,
I see secured to her the proudest fate
That woman can daydream And I could hope
That private bliss would not be wanting her !

METTERNICH

A hope well seated, sire The Emperor,
Imperious and determin'd in his rule,
Is easy-natur'd in domestic life,
As my long time in Paris amply prov'd
Moreover, the accessories of his glory
Have been, and will be, admirably designed
To fire the fancy of a young princess

FRANCIS

Thus far you satisfy me So, to close,
Or not to close with him, 's now the thing

METTERNICH

Your Majesty commands the issue quite
The Father of his people can alone
In such a case give answer—yes or no
Vagueness and doubt have ruined Russia's chance,
Let not, then, such be ours

FRANCIS

You'd answer 'straight You mean, if I,
What would that answer be?

METTERNICH

In state affairs, sire, as in private life,
 Times will arise when even the faithfullest squire
 Finds him unfit to jog his chieftain's choice,
 On whom responsibility must lastly rest
 And such times are pre-eminently, sire,
 Those wherein thought alone is not enough
 To serve the head as guide As Emperor,
 As father, both, to you, to you in sole
 Must apprehend the privilege to pronounce
 Which track stern duty bids you tread herein

FRANCIS

Affection is my duty, heart my guide—
 Without constraint or prompting I shall leave
 The big decision in my daughter's hands
 Before my obligations to my people
 Must stand her wish Go, find her, Metternich,
 Take her the tidings She is free with you,
 And will speak out

(Looking forth upon the terrace)

She's here at hand, I see
 I'll call her in Then tell me what's her mind
 He beckons from the window and goes out in another direction

METTERNICH

So much for form's sake! Can the river-flower
 The current drags, direct its face up stream?
 What she must do she will, nought else at all

Enter through one of the windows MARIA LOUISA in garden costume,
 fresh-coloured, girlish, and smiling METTERNICH bends

MARIA LOUISA

O how, dear Chancellor, you startled me!
 Please pardon my so brusquely bursting in
 I saw you not—Those five poor little birds
 That haunt out there beneath the pediment,
 Snugly defended from the north-east wind,
 Have lately disappeared I sought a trace
 Of scattered feathers, which I dread to find!

METTERNICH

They are gone, I ween, the wav of tender flesh
At the assaults of winter, want, and foes

MARIA LOUISA

It is too melancholy thinking, that !
Don't say it — But I saw the Emperor here ?
Surely he beckoned to me ?

METTERNICH

Sure, he did,
Your gracious Highness, and he has left me here
To break vast news that will make good his call

MARIA LOUISA

Then do I'll listen News from near or far ?

[She seats herself

METTERNICH

From far—though of such distance-dwarfing might
That far may read as near eventually
But, dear Archduchess, with your kindly leave
I'll speak straight out The Emperor of the French
Has sent to-day to make, through Schwarzenberg,
A formal offer of his heart and hand,
His honours, dignities, imperial throne,
To you, whom he admires above all those
The world can show elsewhere

MARIA LOUISA (frightened)

My husband—he ?

What, an old man like him !

METTERNICH (cautiously)

He's scarcely old,
Dear lady True, deeds densely crowd in him,
Turn months to years in calendaring his span,
Yet by Time's common clockwork he's but young

MARIA LOUISA

So wicked, too !

METTERNICH (nettled)

Well—that's a point of view

MARIA LOUISA

But, Chancellor, think what things I have said of him !
Can women marry where they have taunted so ?

METTERNICH

Things ? Nothing inextinguishable, I deem,
By time and true good humour

MARIA LOUISA

O I have !

Horrible things Why—ay, a hundred times—
I have said I wished him dead ! At that stained hour
When the first voicings of the late war came,
Thrilling out how the French were smitten sore
And Bonaparte retreating, I clapped hands
And answered that I hoped he'd lose his head
As well as lose the battle !

METTERNICH

Words But words !

Born like the bubbles of a spring that come
Of zest for springing—aimless in their shape

MARIA LOUISA

It seems indecent, mean, to wed a man
Whom one has held such fierce opinions of !

METTERNICH

My much beloved Archduchess, and revered,
Such things have been ! In Spain and Portugal
Like enmities have led to intermarriage
In England, after waiting thirty years
The Red and White Rose wedded

MARIA LOUISA (after a silence)

Tell me, now,

What does my father wish ?

METTERNICH

His wish is yours.

•
Whatever your Imperial Highness feels
On this grave verdict of your destiny,

Home, title, future sphere, he bids you think
Not of himself, but of your own desire

MARIA LOUISA (reflecting)

My wish is what my duty bids me wish
Where a wide Empire's welfare is in poise,
That welfare must be pondered, not my will
I ask of you, then, Chancellor Metternich,
Straightway to beg the Emperor my father
That he fulfil his duty to the realm,
And quite subordinate thereto all thought
Of how it personally impinge on me

A slight noise as of something falling is heard in the room They glance momentarily, and see that a small enamel portrait of MARIE ANTOINETTE, which was standing on a console table has slipped down on its face

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

What mischief's this? The Will must have its way

SPIRIT SINISTER

Perhaps Earth shivered at the lady's say?

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*I own thereto When France and Austria wed
My echoes are men's groans, my dews are red,
So I have reason for a passing dread!*

METTERNICH

Right nobly phrased, Archduchess, wisely too
I will acquaint your sire the Emperor
With these your views He waits them anxiously

(Going)

MARIA LOUISA

Let me go first It much confuses me
To think—But I would fain let thinking be!

[She goes out trembling]

Enter FRANCIS by another door

METTERNICH

I was about to seek your Majesty
The good Archduchess luminously holds
That in this weighty question you regard
The Empire 'Best for it is best for her

FRANCIS (moved)

My daughter's views thereon do not surprise me
 She is too staunch to pit a private whim
 Against the fortunes of a commonwealth
 During your speech with her I have taken thought
 To shape decision sagely An assent
 Would yield the Empire many years of peace,
 And leave me scope to heal those still green sores
 Which linger from our late unhappy moils
 Therefore, my daughter not being disinclined,
 I know no basis for a negative
 Send, then, a courier prompt to Paris say
 The offer made for the Archduchess' hand
 I do accept—with this defined reserve,
 That no condition, treaty, bond, attach
 To such alliance save the tie itself
 There are some sacrifices whose grave rites
 No bargain must contaminate This 's one—
 This personal gift of a beloved child !

METTERNICH (leaving)

I'll see to it this hour, your Majesty,
 And cast the words in keeping with your wish
 (To himself as he goes) Decently done ! He slipped out "sacrifice
 And scarce could hide his heartache for his girl
 Well ached it !—But when these things have to be
 It is as well to breast them stoically

[Exit METTERNICH

The clouds draw over

SCENE IV

LONDON A CLUB IN ST JAMES'S STREET

A winter midnight Two members are conversing by the fire, and others
 are seen lolling in the background, some of them snoring

FIRST MEMBER

I learn from a private letter that it was carried out in the
 Emperor's Cabinet at the Tuileries—just off the throne-room,
 where they all assembled in the evening,—Boney and the wife

of his bosom (in pure white muslin from head to foot, they say), the Kings and Queens of Holland, Westphalia, and Naples, the Princess Pauline, and one or two more, the officials present being Cambacérès the Chancellor, and Count Regnaud. Quite a small party. It was over in a few minutes—short and sweet, like a donkey's gallop.

SECOND MEMBER

Anything but sweet for her! How did she stand it?

FIRST MEMBER

Serenely, I believe, while the Emperor was making his speech renouncing her, but when it came to her turn to say she renounced him she began sobbing mightily, and was so completely choked up that she couldn't get out a word.

SECOND MEMBER

Poor old dame! I pity her, by God, though she had a rattling good spell while it lasted.

FIRST MEMBER

They say he was a bit upset, too, at sight of her tears. But I dare vow that was put on. Fancy Boney causing a cuise what a woman feels! She had learnt her speech by heart, but that did not help her. Regnaud had to finish it for her, the ditch that overturned her being where she was made to say that she no longer preserved any hope of having children, and that she was pleased to show her attachment by enabling him to obtain them by another woman. She was led off fainting. A turning of the tables, considering how madly jealous she used to make him by her flutations!

Enter a third member

SECOND MEMBER

How is the debate going? Still braying the Government in a mortal?

THIRD MEMBER

They are. Though one thing everybody admits, young Peel has made a wonderful first speech in seconding the address. There has been nothing like it since Pitt. He spoke rousingly of Austria's misfortunes—went on about Spain, of course, showing that we must still go on supporting her, winding up with a

brilliant peroration about—what were the words—“the fiery glance of freedom which flashed incessantly from the indignant eyes of the British soldier!”—Oh, well it was all learnt beforehand, of course

SECOND MEMBER

I wish I had gone down But the wind soon blew the other way

THIRD MEMBER

Then Gower rapped out his amendment That was good, too, by God

SECOND MEMBER

Well, the war must go on And that being the general conviction this censure and that censure are only so many blank cartridges

THIRD MEMBER

Blank? Damn me, were they! Gower's was a palpable hit when he said that Parliament had placed unheard of resources in the hands of Ministers last year, to make this year's results to the country worse than if they had been afforded no resources at all Every single enterprise of theirs had been a beggarly failure

SECOND MEMBER

Anybody could have said it, come to that

THIRD MEMBER

Yes, because it is so true However, when he began to lay on with such rhetoric as “the treasures of the nation lavished in wasteful thoughtlessness,”—“thousands of our troops sacrificed wantonly in the pestilential swamps of Walcheren,” and gave the details we know so well, Ministers wriggled a good one, though 'twas no news to 'em Castlebragh kept on starting forward as if he were going to jump up and interrupt, taking the strictures entirely as a personal affront

Enter a fourth member

SEVERAL MEMBERS

Who's speaking now?

FOURTH MEMBER

I don't know I have heard of nobody later than Ward

SECOND MEMBER

The fact is that, as Whitbread said to me to-day, the materials for condemnation are so prodigious that we can scarce marshal them into argument. We are just able to pour 'em out one upon t'other.

THIRD MEMBER

Waid said, with the blindest air in the world "Censure? Do his Majesty's Ministers expect censure? Not a bit. They are going about asking in tremulous tones if anybody has heard when their impeachment is going to begin."

SEVERAL MEMBERS

Haw-haw-haw!

THIRD MEMBER

Then he made another point. After enumerating our frightful failures—Spain, Walcheren, and the rest—he said "But Ministers have not failed in everything. No, in one thing they have been strikingly successful. They have been successful in their attack upon Copenhagen—because it was directed against an ally!" Mighty fine, wasn't it?

SECOND MEMBER

How did Castlereagh stomach that?

THIRD MEMBER

He replied then. Donning his air of injured innocence he proved the honesty of his intentions—no doubt truly enough. But when he came to Walcheren nothing could be done. The case was hopeless, and he knew it, and foundered. However, at the division, when he saw what a majority was going out on his side he was as fisky as a child. Canning's speech was grave, with bits of shiny ornament stuck on—like the brass nails on a coffin, Sheridan says.

Fifth and sixth members stagger in, arm and arm.

FIFTH MEMBER

The 'vision is——majority of ninety-six against—Gov'ment—I mean—against us. Which is it—hey? (To his companion.)

SIXTH MEMBER

Damn majority of—damn ninety-six—against damn 'amendment!

(They sink down on a sofa.)

SECOND MEMBER

Gad, I didn't expect the figure would have been quite so high !

THIRD MEMBER

The one conviction is that the war in the Peninsula is to go on, and as we are all agreed upon that, what the hell does it matter what their majority is ?

Enter SHERIDAN They all turn inquiringly

SHERIDAN

Have ye heard the latest ?

SECOND MEMBER

Ninety-six against us

SHERIDAN

O no—that's ancient history I'd forgot it

THIRD MEMBER

A revolution, because Ministers are not impeached and hanged ?

SHERIDAN

That's in contemplation, when we've got their confessions But what I meant was from over the water—it is a deuced sight more serious to us than a debate and division that are only like the Liturgy on a Sunday—known beforehand to all the congregation Why, Bonaparte is going to marry Austria forthwith—the Emperor's daughter Maria Louisa

THIRD MEMBER

The Lord look down ! Our late respected cory Austria ! Why, in this very night's debate they have been talking about the laudable principles we have been acting upon in affording assistance to the Emperor Francis in his struggle against the violence and ambition of France !

SECOND MEMBER

Boney safe on that side, what may not befall !

THIRD MEMBER

We had better make it up with him, and shake hands all round

SECOND MEMBER

Shake heads seems most natural in the case O House of Hapsburg, how hast thou fallen !

Enter WHITBREAD LORD HUTCHINSON LORD GEORGE CAVENISH GEORGE PONSONBY WINDHAM, LORD GALE BARING ELLIOT and other members, some drunk The conversation becomes animated and noisy, several move off to the card-room, and the scene closes

SCENE V

THE OLD WEST HIGHWAY OUT OF VIENNA

The spot is where the road passes under the slopes of the Wiener Wald, with its beautiful forest scenery

DUMB SHOW

A procession of enormous length composed of eighty carriages—many of them drawn by six horses and one by eight—and escorted by detachments of cuirassiers yeomanry and other cavalry, is quickening its speed along the highway from the city

The six-horse carriages contain a multitude of Court officials, ladies of the Court and other Austrian nobility The eight-horse coach contains a rosy, blue eyed girl of eighteen, with full red lips round figure and pale auburn hair She is MARIA LOUISA and her eyes are red from recent weeping The COUNTESS DE LAZANSKY, Grand Mistress of the Household, in the carriage with her, and the other ladies of the Palace behind, have a pale proud, yet resigned look, as if conscious that upon their sex had been laid the burden of praying for the peace with France They have been played out of Vienna with French marches, and the trifling incident has helped on their sadness

The observer's vision being still bent on the train of vehicles and cavalry, the point of sight is withdrawn high into the air, till the huge procession on the brown road looks no more than a file of ants crawling along a strip of garden-matting The spacious terrestrial outlook now gained shows this to be the great road across Europe from Vienna to Munich, and from Munich westerly to France

The puny concatenation of specks being exclusively watched, the surface of the earth seems to move along in an opposite direction and in infinite variety of hill, dale woodland and champaign Bridges are crossed, ascents are climbed, plains are galloped over, and towns are reached, among them Saint Polten where night falls

Morning shines and the royal crawl is resumed, and continued through Linz, where the Danube is reapproached, and the girl looks pleased to see her own dear Donau still Presently the tower of Braunau appears where the animated dots pause for formalities, this being the frontier, and MARIA LOUISA becomes MARIE LOUISE and a Frenchwoman, in the charge of French officials

After many breaks and halts, during which heavy rains spread their grazes over the scene, the roofs and houses of Munich disclose themselves, suggesting the tesserae of an irregular mosaic. A long stop is made here.

The tedious advance continues. Vine-circled Stuttgart, flat Karlsruhe, the winding Rhine, storky Strassburg, pass in panorama beneath us as the procession is followed. With Nancy and Bar-le-Duc sliding along the scenes begin to assume a French character, and soon we perceive Châlons and ancient Rheims. The last day of the journey has dawned. Our vision flits ahead of the cortege to Courcelles, a little place which must be passed through before Soissons is reached. Here the point of sight descends to earth, and the Dumb Show ends.

SCENE VI

COURCELLES

It is now seen to be a quiet roadside village, with a humble church in its midst, opposite to which stands an inn, the highway passing between them. Rain is still falling heavily. Not a soul is visible anywhere.

Enter from the west a plain, lonely carriage travelling in a direction to meet the file of coaches that we have watched. It stops near the inn, and two men muffled in cloaks alight by the door away from the hostel and towards the church, as if they wished to avoid observation. Their faces are those of NAPOLÉON and MURAT, his brother-in-law. Crossing the road through the mud and rain they stand in the church porch, and watch the descending dignities.

NAPOLÉON (stamping an impatient tattoo)

One gets more chilly in a wet March than in a dry, however cold, the devil if he don't! What time do you make it now? That clock doesn't go.

MURAT (dully, looking at his watch)

Yes, it does, and it is right. If clocks were to go as fast as your wishes just now it would be awkward for the rest of the world.

NAPOLÉON (chuckling good-humouredly)

How we have dished the Soissons folk, with their pavilions, and purple and gold hangings for bride and bridegroom to meet in, and stately ceremonial to match, and then thousands looking on! Here we are where there's nobody. Ha, ha!

MURAT

But why should they be dished, sire? The pavilions and ceremonies were by your own orders.

NAPOLÉON

Well, as the time got nearer I couldn't stand the idea of dawdling about there

MURAT

The Soissons people will be in a deuce of a taking at being made such fools of!

NAPOLÉON

So let 'em I'll make it up with them somehow—She can't be far off now, if we have timed her rightly (He peers out into the rain and listens)

MURAT

I don't quite see how you are going to manage when she does come Do we go before her towards Soissons when you have greeted her here, or follow in her rear? Or what do we do?

NAPOLÉON

Heavens, I know no more than you! Trust to the moment and see what happens (A silence) Hark—here she comes! Good little girl, up to time!

The distant squashing in the mud of a multitude of hoofs and wheels is succeeded by the appearance of outriders and carriages, horses and horsemen splashed with sump clay of the districts traversed The vehicles slow down to the inn NAPOLÉON'S face fires up, and followed by MURAT he rushes into the rain towards the coach that is drawn by eight horses containing the blue-eyed girl He holds off his hat at the carriage window

MARIE LOUISE (shinking back inside)

Ah, Heaven! Two highwaymen are upon us!

THE EQUERRY D'AUDENARDE (simultaneously)

The Emperor!

The steps of the coach are hastily lowered, NAPOLÉON, dripping jumps in and embraces her The startled ARCHDUCHESS with much blushing and confusion, recognizes him

MARIE LOUISE (tremulously, as she recovers herself)

You are so much—better looking than your portraits—that I hardly knew you! I expected you at Soissons We are not at Soissons yet?

NAPOLÉON

No, my dearest spouse, but we are together ! (Calling out to the equerry) Drive through Soissons—pass the pavilion of reception without stopping, and don't halt till we reach Compiègne

He sits down in the coach and is shut in MURVY laughing silently at the scene Exeunt carriages and riders towards Soissons

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*First 'twas a finished coquette,
And now it's a raw ingénue —
Blonde instead of brunette,
An old wife doffed for a new
She'll bring him a baby,
As quickly as maybe,
And that's what he wants her to do,
Hoo-hoo !
And that's what he wants her to do !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

What lewdness lip those wry-formed phantoms there ?

IRONIC SPIRITS

*Nay, Showman Years ! With holy reverent air
We hymn the nuptials of the Imperial pair*

The rain thickens to a mist and obscures the scene

SCENE VII

PETERSBURG THE PALACE OF THE EMPRESS-MOTHER

One of the private apartments is disclosed, in which the Empress mother and Alexander are seated

EMPRESS-MOTHER

So one of Austrian blood his pomp selects
To be his bride and bulwark—not our own
Thus are you coolly shelved !

ALEXANDER

Me, mother dear ?

You, faith, if I may say it dutifully !
Had all been left to me, some time ere now
He would have wedded Kate.

EMPRESS-MOTHER

How so, my son ?
Catharine was plighted, and it could not be

ALEXANDER

Rather you swiftly pledged and married her,
To let Napoléon have no chance that way
But Anne remained

EMPRESS MOTHER

How Anne ?—so young a girl !
Sane Nature would have cried indecency
At such a tioth

ALEXANDER

Time would have tinkered that,
And he was well-disposed to wait awhile,
But the one test he had no temper for
Was the appaarent slight of unresponse
Accorded his impatient overtures
By our suspensive poise of policy

EMPRESS-MOTHER

A backward answer is our country's caid—
The special style and mode of Muscovy
We have grown great upon it, my dear son,
And may such practice rule our centuries through !
The necks of those who rate themselves our peers
Are cured of stiffness by its potency

ALEXANDER

The principle in this case, anyhow,
Is shattered by the facts since none can doubt
Your policy was counted an affront,
And drove my long ally to Austria's aims,
With what result to us must yet be seen '

EMPRESS-MOTHER

May Austria win much joy of the alliance '
Marrying Napoléon is a midnight leap
For any Court in Europe, credit me,
If ever such there were ! What he may carve

Upon the coming years, what murderous bolt
Hurl at the rocking Constitutions round,
On what dark planet he may land himself
In his career through space, no sage can say
One thing we may assume as certainty—
That he will never rest in righteous rule

ALEXANDER

Well—possibly! And maybe all is best
That he engrafts his lineage not on us —
But, honestly, Napoleon none the less
Has been my friend, and I regret the dream
And fleeting fancy of a closer tie!

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Ay, your regrets are sentimental ever
That he'll be writ no son-in-law of mine
Is no regret to me! But an affront
There is, no less, in his evasion on't,
Wherein the bourgeois quality of him
Veraciously peeps out I would be sworn
He set his minions parleying with the twain—
Yourself and Francis—simultaneously,
Else no betrothal could have speeded so!

ALEXANDER

Despite the hazard of offence to one?

EMPRESS-MOTHER

More than the hazard, the necessity

ALEXANDER

There's no offence to me

EMPRESS-MOTHER

 There should be, then
I am a Romanoff by marriage merely,
But I do feel a rare belittlement
And loud laconic brow-beating herein!

ALEXANDER

No, mother, no ! I am the Tsar—not you,
 And I am only piqued in moderateness
 Marriage with France was near my heart—I own it—
 What then ? It has been otherwise ordained

[A silence

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Here comes dear Anne Speak not of it before her

Enter the GRAND DUCHESS, a girl of sixteen

ANNE

Alas ! the news is that poor Prussia's queen,
 Spirited Queen Louisa, once so fair,
 Is slowly dying, mother ! Did you know ?

ALEXANDER (betraying emotion)

Alas !—such I dreaded from the earlier hints
 Poor soul—her heart was slain some time ago

ANNE

What do you mean by that, my brother dear ?

EMPRESS-MOTHER

He means, my child, that he as usual spends
 Much sentiment upon the foreign fair,
 And hence leaves little for his folk at home

ALEXANDER

I mean, Anne, that her country's overthrow
 Let death into her heart The Tilsit days
 Taught me to know her well, and honour her
 She was a lovely woman even then !
 Strangely, the present English Prince of Wales
 Was wished to husband her Had wishes won,
 They might have varied Europe's history

ANNE

Napoléon, I have heard, admired her once,
 How he must grieve that soon she'll be no more !

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Napoléon and your brother loved her both

[Alexander shows embarrassment]

But whatsoever grief be Alexander's,
His will be none who feels but for himself

ANNE

O mother, how can you mistake him so !
He worships her who is to be his wife,
The fair Archduchess Marie

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Simple child,
As yet he has never seen her, or but barely
That is a tactic suit, with love to match !

ALEXANDER (with vainly veiled tenderness)

High-souled Louisa, —when shall I forget
Those firsit gatherings in the long-sunned June !
Napoléon's gallantries deceived her quite,
Who fondly felt her pleas for Magdeburg
Had won him to its cause, the while, alas !
His cynic sense but posed in cruel play !

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Bitterly mourned she her civilities
When time unlocked the truth, that she had choked
Her indignation at his former slights
And slanderous sayings for a baseless hope,
And wrought no tittle for her country's gain
I marvel why you mourn a frustrate tie
With one whose wiles could wring a woman so !

ALEXANDER (uneasily)

I marvel also, when I think of it !

EMPRESS-MOTHER

Don't listen to us longer, dearest Anne

[Exit ANNE]

—You will uphold my judging by and by,
That as a suitor we are well quit of him,
And that blind Austria will rue the hour
Wherein she plucks for him her fairest flower !

The scene shuts

SCENE VIII

PARIS THE GRAND GALLERY OF THE LOUVRE
AND THE SALON-CARRÉ ADJOINING

The view is up the middle of the Gallery, which is now a spectacle of much magnificence. Backed by the large paintings on the walls are double rows on each side of brightly dressed ladies the pick of Imperial society, to the number of four thousand one thousand in each row and behind these standing up are two rows on each side of men of privilege and fashion. Officers of the Imperial Guard are dotted about as marshals.

Temporary barriers form a wide passage up the midst, leading to the Salon-Carré, which is seen through the opening to be fitted up as a chapel with a gorgeous altar, tall candles, and cross. In front of the altar is a platform with a canopy over it. On the platform are two gilt chairs and a prie dieu.

The expectant assembly does not continuously remain in the seats but promenades and talks, the voices at times rising to a din amid the strains of the orchestra conducted by the EMPEROR'S Director of Music. Refreshments in profusion are handed round, and the extemporized cathedral resolves itself into a gigantic café of persons of distinction under the Empire.

SPIRIT SINISTER

All day have they been waiting for their galanty show, and now the hour of performance is on the strike. It may be seasonable to muse on the sixteenth Louis and the bride's great aunt, as the nearing procession is, I see, appositely crossing the track of the tumbril which was the last coach of that respected lady. It is now passing over the site of the scaffold on which she lost her head. Now it will soon be here.

Suddenly the heralds enter the Gallery at the end towards the Tuileries, the spectators ranging themselves in their places. In a moment the wedding procession of the EMPEROR and EMPRESS becomes visible. The civil marriage having already been performed Napoléon and Marie Louise advance together along the vacant pathway towards the Salon-Carré followed by the long suite of illustrious personages, and acclamations burst from all parts of the Grand Gallery.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Whose are those forms that pair in pompous train
Behind the hand in hand half-wedded ones
With faces speaking sense of an adventure
Which may close well, or not so?*

RECORDING ANGEL (reciting)

*First there walks
 The Emperor's brother Louis, Holland's King,
 Then Jérôme of Westphalia with his spouse,
 The mother-queen, and Julie Queen of Spain,
 The Prince Borghèse and the Princess Pauline,
 Beauharnais the Vice-King of Italy,
 And Murat King of Naples, with their Queens,
 Baden's Grand-Duke, Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès,
 Berthier, Lebrun, and, not least, Talleyrand
 Then the Grand Marshal and the Chamberlain,
 The Lords-in-Waiting, the Grand Equerry,
 With waiting-ladies, women of the chamber,
 And others called by office, rank, or fame*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*New, many, to Imperial dignities,
 Which, won by character and quality
 In those who now enjoy them, will become
 The birthright of their sons in aftertime*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It fits thee not to augur, quick-eared Shade
 Ephemeral at the best all honours be,
 These even more ephemeral than their kind,
 So random-fashioned, swift, perturbation!*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Napoléon looks content—nay, shines with joy

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Yet see it pass, as by a conjuror's wand

Thereupon Napoléon's face blackens as if the shadow of a winter night had fallen upon it. Resentful and threatening he stops the procession and looks up and down the benches.

SPIRIT SINISTER

*This is sound artistry of the Immanent Will—it relieves the
 monotony of so much good-humour*

NAPOLÉON (to the Chapel-master)

Where are the Cardinals? And why not here?
 (He speaks so loud that he is heard throughout the Gallery.)

ABBÉ DE PRADT (trembling)

Many are present here, your Majesty,
But some are feebled by infirmities
Too common to their age, and cannot come

NAPOLÉON

Tell me no nonsense! Half absent themselves
Because they *will* not come The factious fools!
Well, be it so But they shall flinch for it!

MARIE LOUISE looks frightened The procession moves on

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I seem to see the thin and headless ghost
Of the yet earlier Austrian, here, too, queen,
Walking beside the bride, with frail attempts
To pluck her by the arm!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, think not so
No trump unseals earth's sepulchres to-day
We are the only phantoms now abroad
On this mud-moulded ball! Through sixteen years
She has decayed in a back-garden yonder,
Dust all the showance time retains of her,
Senseless of husplings in her former house,
Lost to all count of crowns and bridalry—
Even of her Austrian blood No what thou seest
Springs of thy quavering fancy, stirred to dreams
By yon tart phantom's phrase*

MARIE LOUISE (sadly to Napoléon)

I know not why,
I love not this day's doings half so well
As our quaint meeting-time at Compiégne
A clammy air creeps round me, as from vaults
Peopled with looming spectres, chilling me
And angering you withal!

NAPOLÉON

O, it is nought
To trouble you merely, my cherished one,
Those devils of Italian Cardinals!—
Now I'll be bright as ever—you must, too

MARIE LOUISE

I'll try

Reaching the entrance to the Salon-Carré amid strains of music the EMPEROR and EMPRESS are received and incensed by the CARDINAL GRAND ALMONERS. They take their seats under the canopy, and the train of notabilities seat themselves further back the persons-in-waiting stopping behind the Imperial chairs.

The ceremony of the religious marriage now begins. The choir intones a hymn, the EMPEROR and EMPRESS go to the altar remove their gloves, and make their vows.

SPIRIT IRONIC

The English Church should return thanks for this wedding, seeing how it will purge of coarseness the picture-shells of that artistic nation, which will hardly be able to caricature the new wife as it did poor plebeian Josephine. Such starchy and bowed monarchists cannot sneer at a woman of such a divinely dry and crusted line as the Hapsburgs.'

Mass is next celebrated after which the TE DEUM is chanted in harmonies that whirl round the walls of the Salon-Carré and quiver down the long Gallery. The procession then reforms and returns amid the flutterings and applause of the dense assembly. But Napoleon's face has not lost the sombre expression which settled on it. The pair and their train pass out by the west door and the congregation disperses in the other direction, the cloud curtain closing over the scene as they disappear.

ACT SIXTH

SCENE I

THE LINES OF TORRÈS VÉDRAS

A bird's eye perspective is revealed of the peninsular tract of Portuguese territory lying between the shining pool of the Tagus on the east and the white-filled Atlantic lifting rhythmically on the west. As thus beheld the tract features itself somewhat like a late Gothic shield the upper edge from the dexter to the sinister chief being the lines of Torres Vedras stretching across from the mouth of the Zêzembre on the left to Alhandra on the right, and the south or base point being Fort S. Julian. The roofs of Lisbon appear at the sinister base and in a corresponding spot on the opposite side Cape Roca.

It is perceived in a moment that the northern verge of this nearly coast hemmed region is the only one through which access can be gained to it by land, and a close scrutiny of the boundary there reveals that means are being adopted to effectually prevent such access.

From east to west along it runs a chain of defences, dotted at intervals by

dozens of circular and square redoubts, either made or in the making two of the latter being of enormous size. Between these stretch unclimbable escarpments, stone walls, and other breastworks, and in front of all a double row of abatis, formed of the limbs of trees.

Within the outer line of defence is a second, constructed on the same principle, its course being bent to take advantage of natural features. This second rampart is finished, and appears to be impregnable.

The third defence is far off southward, guarding the very base point of the shield-shaped tract of country, and is not more than a twelfth of the length of the others. It is a continuous entrenchment of ditches and ramparts, and its object—that of covering a forced embarkation—is rendered apparent by some rocking English transports off the shore hid by

DUMB SHOW

Innumerable human figures are busying themselves like cheese mites all along the northernmost frontier, undercutting easy slopes into steep ones, digging ditches, piling stones, filling trees, dragging them, and interlocking them along the front as required.

On the second breastwork, which is completed, only a few figures move.

On the third breastwork, which is fully matured and equipped, minute red sentinels creep backwards and forwards noiselessly.

As time passes three reddish grey streams of marching men loom out to the north, advancing southward along three roads towards three diverse points in the first defence. These form the English army entering the lines for shelter. Looked down upon, their motion seems peristaltic and vermicular, like that of three caterpillars. The division on the left is under Picton, in the centre under Leith and Cole, and on the extreme right, by Alhambra, under Hill. Beside one of the roads two or three of the soldiers are dangling from a tree by the neck, probably for plundering.

The Dumb Show ends, and the point of view sinks to the earth.

SCENE II

THE SAME OUTSIDE THE LINES

The winter day has gloomed to a stormful evening, and the road outside the first line of defence forms the foreground of the stage.

Enter in the dusk from the hills to the north of the entrenchment, near Calandria, a group of horsemen, which includes MASSÉNA, in command of the French forces, FOY LOISON, and other officers of his staff.

They ride forward in the twilight and tempest, and reconnoitre till they see against the sky the impediments blocking the road they pursue. They halt silently. MASSÉNA, puzzled, endeavours with his glass to make out the obstacle.

MASSÉNA

Something stands here to peril our advance,
Or even prevent it!

FOY

These are the English lines—
 Their outer hoins and tusks—whereof I spoke,
 Constructed by Lord Wellington of late
 To keep his foothold firm in Portugal

MASSÉNA

Thrusts he his bully, bossed disfigurements
 So far to north as this? I had pictured me
 They lay much nearer Lisbon Little strange
 Lord Wellington rode placid at Busaco
 With this behind his back! Well, it is hard
 But that we turn them somewhere, I assume?
 They scarce can close up every southward gap
 Between the Tagus and the Atlantic Sea

FOY

I hold they can, and do, although, no doubt,
 By searching we shall spy some raggedness
 Which custom'd skill may force

MASSÉNA

Plain 'tis, no less,
 We may heap corpses vainly hereabout,
 And crack good bones in waste By human power
 This passes mounting! What say you's behind?

LOISON

Another line exactly like the first,
 But more matured Behind its back a third

MASSÉNA

How long have these grim ponderosities
 Been rearing up their foreheads to the moon?

LOISON

Some months in all I know not quite how long
 They are Lord Wellington's select device,
 And, like him, heavy, slow, labourious, sure

MASSÉNA

May he enjoy their suzerainty He deserves to
I had no inkling of such barriers here
A good road runs along their front, it seems,
Which offers us advantage What a night !

The tempest cries dismally about the earthworks above them, as the reconnoiters linger in the slight shelter the lower ground affords. They are about to turn back.

Enter from the cross road to the right JUNO and some more officers. They come up at a signal that the others are those they lately parted from.

JUNO

We have hidden along as far as Calandrin,
Favoured therein by this disordered night,
Which tongues its language to the disguise of ours,
And find amid the vale an open route
That, well manœuvred, may be practicable.

MASSÉNA

I'll look now at it, while the weather aids
If it may serve our end when all's prepared
So good. If not, some other to the west.

Exit MASSÉNA, JUNO, LOISON, FOY and the rest by the paved crossway to the right.

The wind continues to prevail as the spot is left desolate: the darkness increases, rain descends more heavily, and the scene is blotted out.

SCENE III

PAPIS THE TUILERIES

The anteroom to the EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE'S bed chamber, in which we discovered NAPOLÉON in his dressing-gown, the DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO and other ladies-in-waiting, CORVISART the first physician, and the second physician BOURDIER.

The time is before dawn. The EMPEROR walks up and down, throws himself on a sofa, or stands at the window. A cry of anguish comes occasionally from within.

NAPOLÉON opens the door and speaks into the bed chamber.

NAPOLÉON

How now, Dubois ?

VOICE OF DUBOIS THE ACCOUCHEUR (nervously)

Less well, sire, than I hoped,
I fear no skill can save them both

NAPOLÉON (agitated)

Good God!

Exit CORVISART into the bed-room Enter DUBOIS

DUBOIS (with hesitation)

Which life is to be saved? The Empress, sire,
Lies in great jeopardy I have not known
In my long years of many-featured practice
An instance in a thousand fall out so

NAPOLÉON

Then save the mother, pray! Think but of her
It is her privilege, and my command —
Don't lose your head, Dubois, at this tight time
Your furthest skill can work but what it may
Fancy that you are merely standing by
A shop-wife's couch, say, in the Rue Saint Denis
Show the aplomb and phlegm that you would show
Did such a bed receive your ministry

[Exit DUBOIS]

VOICE OF MARIE LOUISE (within)

O pray, pray don't! Those ugly things terrify me! Why
should I be tortured even if I am but a means to an end! Let
me die! It was cruel of him to bring this upon me!

Exit NAPOLÉON impatiently to the bed-room

VOICE OF MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU (within)

Keep up your spirits, madame! I have been through it myself, and I assure you there is no danger to you. It is going on all right, and I am holding you

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON (within)

Heaven above! Why did you not keep those cursed sugar-tongs out of her sight? How is she going to get through it if you frighten her like this?

VOICE OF DUBOIS (within)

If you will pardon me, your Majesty,
 I must implore you not to interfere !
 I'll not be scapegoat for the consequence
 If, sire, you do ! Better for her sake far
 Would you withdraw The sight of your concern
 But agitates and weakens her endurance
 I will inform you all, and call you back
 If things should worsen here

Re enter NAPOLÉON from the bed chamber He half shuts the door and
 remains close to it listening pale and nervous

BOURDIER

I ask you, sire,
 To harass yourself less with this event,
 Which may amend anon I much regret
 The honoured mother of your Majesty,
 And sister too, should both have left ere now,
 Whose solace would have bridged these anxious hours

NAPOLÉON (absently)

As we were not expecting it so soon
 I begged they would sit up no longer here
 She ought to get along, she has help enough
 With that half dozen of them at hand within—
 Skilled Madame Blaise the nurse, and two besides,
 Madame de Montesquiou and Madame Ballant—

DUBOIS (speaking through the doorway)

Past is the question, sire, of which to save !
 The child is dead, the while her Majesty
 Is getting through it well

NAPOLÉON

Praise Heaven for that !
 I'll not grieve overmuch about the child
 Never shall she go through this strain again
 To lay down a dynastic line for me

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO (aside to second lady)

He only says that now In cold blood it would be far other
 wise That's how men are

VOICE OF MADAME BLAISE (within)

Doctor, the child's alive !

(The cry of an infant is heard)

VOICE OF DUBOIS (calling from within)

Sire, both are saved

NAPOLÉON rushes into the chamber, and is heard kissing MARIE LOUISE

VOICE OF MADAME BLAISE (within)

A vigorous boy, your Imperial Majesty The brandy and hot napkins brought him to

DUCHESS OF MONTERELLO

It is as I expected A healthy young woman of her build had every chance of doing well, despite the doctors

An interval

NAPOLÉON (re entering radiantly)

We have achieved a healthy heir, good dames,
And in the feat the Empress was most brave,
Although she suffered much—so much, indeed,
That I would sooner father no more sons
Than have so fair a fruit-tree undergo
Another wenching of such magnitude

He walks to the window, pulls aside the curtains, and looks out It is a joyful spring morning The Tuileries gardens are thronged with an immense crowd kept at a little distance off the Palace by a cord The windows of the neighbouring houses are full of gazers and the streets are thronged with halting carriages, their inmates awaiting the event

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (whispering to Napoléon)

*At this high hour there broods a woman nigh,
Ay, here in Paris, with her child and thine,
Who might have played this part with truer eye
To thee and to thy contemplated line '*

NAPOLÉON (soliloquizing)

Strange that just now there flashes on my soul
That little one I loved in Warsaw days,
Marie Walewska, and my boy by her !—

She was shown faithless by a foul intrigue
Till fate sealed up her opportunity
But what's one woman's fortune more or less
Beside the schemes of kings !—Ah, there's the news !
A gun is heard from the Invalides

CROWD (excitedly)

One !

Another report of the gun, and another, succeed

Two ! Three ! Four !

The firing and counting proceed to twenty one when there is great suspense. The gun fires again, and the excitement is doubled.

Twenty-two ! A boy !

The remainder of the counting up to a hundred and-one is drowned in huzzas. Bells begin ringing and from the Champ de Mars a balloon ascends, from which the tidings are scattered in hand bills as it floats away across France.

Enter the PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE CAMBACÉRÈS, BETHIER, LEBRUN, and other officers of state NAPOLÉON turns from the window

CAMBACÉRÈS

Unstinted congratulations and goodwill
We bring to your Imperial Majesty,
While still resounds the superflux of joy
With which your people welcome this live star
Upon the horizon of our history !

PRESIDENT OF SENATE

All blessings at their goodliest will grace
The advent of this New Messiah, sire,
Of fairer prospects than the former one,
Whose coming at so apt an hour endues
The widening glory of your high exploits
With permanence, and flings the dimness far
That cloaked the future of our chronicle !

NAPOLEÓN

My thanks, though, gentlemen, upon my soul
 You might have drawn the line at the Messiah
 But I excuse you — Yes, the boy has come,
 He took some coaxing, but he's here at last —
 And what news brings the morning from without?
 I know of none but this the Empress now
 Triumphs to the world from the adjoining room

PRESIDENT OF SENATE

Nothing in Europe, sire, that can compare
 In magnitude therewith to more effect
 Than with an eagle some frail finch or wren
 To wit the ban on English trade prevailing,
 Subjects our merchant-houses to such strain
 That many of the best see bankruptcy
 Like a grim ghost ahead Next week, they say
 In secret here, six of the largest close

NAPOLÉON

It shall not be ! Our burst of natal joy
 Must not be sullied by so mean a thing
 And shall be rendered Much as we may suffer,
 England must suffer more, and I am content
 What has come in from Spain and Portugal ?

BERTHIER

Vaguely-voiced rumours, sire, but nothing more,
 Which travel countries quick as earthquake thrills,
 No mortal knowing how

NAPOLÉON

Of Masséna ?

BERTHIER

Yea He retreats for prudence' sake, it seems,
 Before Lord Wellington Dispatches soon
 Must reach your Majesty, explaining all

NAPOLÉON

Ever retreating ! Why declines he so
 From all his olden prowess ? Why, again,
 Did he give battle at Busaco lately,
 When Lisbon could be marched on without strain ?
 Why has he dallied by the Tagus bank
 And shunned the obvious course ? I gave him Ney,
 Soult, and Junot, and eighty thousand men,
 And he does nothing Really it might seem
 As though we meant to let this Wellington
 Be even with us there !

BERTHIER

His mighty foits
At Toriès Vedras hamper Massena,
And quite preclude advance

NAPOLÉON

O well—no matter
Why should I linger on these haps of war
Now that I have a son !

Exit NAPONION by one door and by another the PRESIDENT OF THE
SENATE CAMBACERIS, LEBRUN, BERTHIER and officials

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*The Will Itself is slave to him,
And holds it blissful to obey !—
He said, " Go to, it is my whim
" To bed a bride without delay,
Who shall unite my dull new name
With one that shone in Caesar's day
" She must conceive—you hear my claim ?—
And bear a son—no daughter, mind—
Who shall hand on my form and fame
" To future times as I have designed,
And at the birth throughout the land
Must cannon roar and alp-horns wind "*
*The Will grew conscious at command,
And ordered issue as he planned*

The interior of the Palace is veiled

SCENE IV

SPAIN ALBUERA

The dawn of a mid May day in the same spring shows the village of Albuera with the country around it, as viewed from the summit of a line of hills on which the English and their allies are ranged under Beresford. The landscape swept by the eye includes to the right foreground a hill loftier than any and somewhat detached from the range. The green slopes behind and around this hill are untrodden—though in a few hours to be the sanguinary scene of the most murderous struggle of the whole war.

The village itself lies to the left foreground, with its stream flowing behind it from the distance on the right. A creeping brook at the bottom of the heights held by the English joins the stream by the village. Behind the

stream some of the French forces are visible. Away behind these stretches a great wood several miles in area out of which the Albuera stream emerges, and behind the furthest verge of the wood the morning sky lightens momentarily. The birds in the wood, unaware that this day is to be different from every other day they have known there are heard singing their overtures with their usual serenity.

DUMB SHOW

As objects grow more distinct it can be perceived that some strategic dispositions of the night are being completed by the French forces which the evening before lay in the woodland to the front of the English army. They have emerged during the darkness and huge sections of them—infantry, cuirassiers and artillery—have crept round to BELSFORD'S right without his suspecting the movement where they lie hidden by the great hill aforesaid, though not more than half a mile from his right wing.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*A hot ado goes forward here to day,
If I may read the Imminent Intert
From signs and tokens blent
With wend and unest along the firmament
Of causal coils in passionate display
—Look narrowly, and what you witness say*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I see red smears upon the sultry dawn,
And seeming drops of gore. On earth below
Are men—unnatured and mechanic-drawn—
Mixt nationalities in row and row,
Wheeling them to and fro
In moves dissociate from their souls' demand,
For dynasts' ends that few even understand.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Speak more materially, and less in dream

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*I'll do it. The stir of strife grows well defined
Around the hamlet and the church thereby
Till, from the wood, the ponderous columns wind,
Guided by Godinot, with Werle might
They bear upon the wall. But the gruff guns
Of Duckson's Portuguese
Punch spectral vistas through the maze of these!
More Frenchmen press, and roaring entiphons
Of cannonry confuse the roofs and walls and trees*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Wrecked are the ancient bridge, the green spring plot,
The blooming fruit-tree, the fair flower-knot !*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*Yet the true mischief to the English might
Is meant to fall not there Look to the right,
And read the shaping scheme by yon hill-side,
Where cannon, foot, and brisk dragoons you see,
With Werle and Latour-Maubourg to guide,
Waiting to breast the full-brow bloodily*

BLAESFORD now becomes aware of this project on his flank, and sends orders to throw back his right to face the attack The order is not obeyed Almost at the same moment the French rush is made the Spanish and Portuguese allies of the English are beaten back and the hill is won But two English divisions bear from the centre of their front, and plod desperately up the hill to retake it

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Now he among us who may wish to be
A skilled practitioner in slaughter,
Should watch this hour's fruition yonder there,
And he will know, if knowing ever were,
How mortals may be freed their fleshly cells,
And quaint red doors set ope in sweating fells,
By methods swift and slow and foul and fair !*

The English, who have plunged up the hill are caught in a heavy mist, that hides from them in advance in their rear of the lancers and hussars of the enemy The lines of the Buffs, the Sixty-sixth, and those of the Forty-eighth who were with them, in a chaos of smoke steel, sweat curses and blood, are beheld melting down like wax from an erect position to confused heaps Their forms lie rigid, or twitch and turn, as they are tripped over by the hoofs of the enemy's horse Those that have not fallen are taken

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*It works as you, uncanny Phantom, wist !
Whose is that towering form
That tears across the mist
To where the shocks are sorest ?—his with arm
Outstretched, and grimy face, and bloodshot eye,
Like one who, having done his deeds, will die ?*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*He is one Beresford, who heads the fight
For England here to-day*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*He calls the sight
Despite itself!—pannes yon lancer's thrust,
And with his own sword renders dust to dust!*

The ghastly climax of the strife is reached, the combatants are seen to be firing grape and canister at speaking distance, and discharging musketry in each other's faces when so close that their complexions may be recognized. Hot corpses, their mouths blackened by cartridge biting, and surrounded by cast-away knapsacks, firelocks, hats, stocks, flint boxes, and priming horns, together with red and blue rags of clothing, garters, epaulettes, limbs, and viscera, accumulate on the slopes, increasing from twos and threes to half dozens, and from half-dozens to heaps, which steam with their own warmth as the spring rain falls gently upon them.

The critical instant has come, and the English break. But a comparatively fresh division with fusileers is brought into the turmoil by HARDINGE and COLF, and these make one last strain to save the day and their names and lives. The fusileers mount the incline and issuing from the smoke and mist startle the enemy by their arrival on a spot deemed won.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*They come, beset by rattling hail,
They sway like sedges in a gale,
They fail, and win, and win, and fail—Albuera!*

SEMICHORUS II

*They gain the ground there, yard by yard,
Their brows and hair and lashes charred,
Their blackened teeth set firm and hard*

SEMICHORUS I

*Their mad assailants rave and reel,
And face, as men who scorn to feel,
The close-lined, three-edged prongs of steel*

SEMICHORUS II

*Till faintness follows closing-in,
When, faltering headlong down, they spin
Like leaves—But those pay well who win Albuera*

SEMICHORUS I

*Out of six thousand souls that swear
To hold the mount, or pass elsewhere,
But eighteen hundred muster there*

SEMICHORUS II

*Pale Colonels, Captains, ranksmen lie,
Facing the earth or facing sky,—
They strove to live, they stretch to die*

SEMICHORUS I

*Friends, foemen, mingle, heap and heap—
Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep,
Where harmless worms caress and creep*

CHORUS

*Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep,
Where harmless worms caress and creep—
What man can grieve? what woman weep?
Better than waking is to sleep! Albucra!*

The night comes on and darkness covers the battle field

SCENE V

WINDSOR CASTLE A ROOM IN THE KING'S APARTMENTS

The walls of the room are padded, and also the articles of furniture, the stuffs being overlaid with satin and velvet on which are worked in gold thread monograms and crowns. The windows are guarded, and the floor covered with thick cork carpeted. The time is shortly after the last scene.

The KING is seated by a window and two of Dr. WILLIS'S attendants are in the room. His MAJESTY is now seventy-two, his sight is very defective, but he does not look ill. He appears to be lost in melancholy thought and talks to himself reproachfully in hurried manner on occasion being the only irregular symptom that he betrays.

KING

In my lifetime I did not look after her enough—enough—enough! And now she is lost to me, and I shall never see her more. Had I but known, had I but thought of it! Gentlemen, when did I lose the Princess Amelia?

FIRST ATTENDANT

The second of last November, your Majesty

KING

And what is it now?

FIRST ATTENDANT

Now, sir, it is the beginning of June

KING

Ah, June, I remember! The June flowers are not for me. I shall never see them, nor will she. So fond of them as she was. Even if I were living I would never go where there are flowers any more! No. I would go to the bleak, barren places that she never would walk in, and never knew, so that nothing might remind me of her, and make my heart ache more than I can bear! Why, the beginning of June?—that's when they are coming to examine me! (He grows excited.)

FIRST ATTENDANT (to second attendant, aside)

Dr Reynolds ought not to have reminded him of their visit. It only disquiets him and makes him less fit to see them.

KING

How long have I been confined here?

FIRST ATTENDANT

Since November, sir, for your health's sake entirely, as your Majesty knows.

KING

What, what? So long? Ah, yes. I must bear it. This is the fourth great black gulf in my poor life, is it not? The fourth.

A signal at the door. The second attendant opens it and whispers. Enter softly SIR HENRY HALFORD, DR WILLIAM HEBERDEN, DR ROBERT WILLIS, DR MATTHEW BAILLIE, the KING'S APOTHECARY and one or two other gentlemen.

KING (straining his eyes to discern them)

What! Are they come? What will they do to me? How dare they! I am Elector of Hanover! (Finding Dr Willis is among them he shrieks.) O, they are going to bleed me—yes, to bleed me! (Piteously.) My friends, don't bleed me—pray don't! It makes me so weak to take my blood. And the leeches do, too, when you put so many. You will not be so unkind, I am sure!

WILLIS (to Baillie)

It is extraordinary what a vast aversion he has to bleeding—that most salutary remedy, fearlessly practised. He submits to leeches as yet, but I won't say that he will for long without being strait-jacketed.

KING (catching some of the words)

You will strait-jacket me ? O no, no !

WILLIS

Leeches are not effective, really. Di Home, when I mentioned it to him yesterday, said he would bleed him till he fainted if he had charge of him !

KING

O will you do it, sir, against my will,
And put me, once your king, in needless pain ?
I do assure you truly, my good friends,
That I have done no harm ! In sunnier years
Ere I was throneless, withered to a shade,
Deprived of my divine authority—
When I was hale, and ruled the English land—
I ever did my utmost to promote
The welfare of my people, body and soul !
Right many a morn and night I have prayed and mused
How I could bring them to a better way
So much of me you surely know, my friends,
And will not hurt me in my weakness here !

(He trembles)

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*The tears that lie about this plightful scene
Of heavy travail in a suffering soul,
Mocked with the forms and feints of royalty
While scarified by brierly Circumstance,
Might drive Compassion past her patience
To hold that some mean, monstrous womst
Had built this mistimed fabric of the Spheres
To watch the throbbings of its captive lives,
(The which may Truth forfend), and not thy said
Unvalued, unimpassioned, nescient Will !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Mild one, be not too touched with human fate
Such is the Drama such the Mortal state
No sigh of thine can null the Plan Predestinate !*

HALFORD

We have come to do your Majesty no harm
Here's Dr Heberden, whom I am sure you like,
And this is Dr Baillie. We arrive
But to inquire and gather how you are,
Thereon to let the Privy Council know,
And give assurance for your people's good
A brass band is heard playing in a distant part of Windsor

KING

Ah—what does that band play for here to day?
She has been dead and I so short a time!
Her little hands are hardly cold as yet,
But they can show such cruel indecency
As to let trumpets play!

HALFORD

They guess not, sir,
That you can hear them, or their chords would cease
Their boisterous music fetches back to me
That, of our errands to your Majesty,
One was congratulation most sincere
Upon this glorious victory you have won
The news is just in port, the band booms out
To celebrate it, and to honour you

KING

A victory? I? Pray where?

HALFORD

Indeed so, sir
Hard by Albuera—far in hallowed Spain—
Yes, sir, you have achieved a victory
Of dash unmatched and feats unparalleled!

KING

He says I have won a battle? But I thought
I was a poor afflicted captive here,
In darkness lingering out my lonely days,
Beset with terror of these midnight
That suck my blood like vampires! Av, ay, ay!—

No aims left to me but to quicken death
 To quicken please my son !—And yet he says
 That I have won a battle ! O God, curse, damn !
 When will the speech of the world accord with truth,
 And men's tongues roll sincerely !

GENTLEMAN (aside)

Faith, 'twould seem
 As if the madman were the sanest here !

The KING'S face has flushed and he becomes violent The attendants
 rush forward to him

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Something within me aches to pray
 To some Great Heart, to take away
 This evil day, this evil day !*

CHORUS IRONIC

*Ho ! a ! That's good Thou'lt pray to It —
 But where do Its compassions sit ?
 Yea, where abides the heart of It ?*

*Is it where sky-fires flame and flut,
 Or solar craters spew and spit,
 Or ultra-stellar night-webs knit ?*

*What is Its shape ? Man's counterfeit ?
 That turns in some far sphere unlit
 The Wheel which drives the Infinite ?*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Mock on, mock on ! Yet I'll go pray
 To some Great Heart, who haply may
 Charm mortal miseries away !*

The KING'S paroxysm continues The attendants hold him

HALFORD

This is distressing One can never tell
 How he will take things now I thought Albuera,
 A subject that would surely solace him
 These paroxysms—have they been bad this week ? (To
 Attendants)

FIRST ATTENDANT

Sir Hemy, no He has quite often named
The late Princess, as gently as a child
A little bird found starved

WILLIS (aside to apothecary)

I must increase the opium to-night, and lower him by a double
set of leeches since he won't stand the lancet quietly

APOTHECARY

You should take twenty ounces, doctor, if a drop—indeed,
go on bleeding till he's unconscious He is too robust by half
And the watering-pot would do good again—not less than six
feet above his head See how heated he is

WILLIS

Curse that town band It will have to be stopped

HEBERDEN

The same thing is going on all over England, no doubt, on
account of this victory

HALFORD

When he is in a more domineering mood he likes such
allusions to his rank as king If he could resume his walks
on the terrace he might improve slightly But it is too soon yet
We must consider what we shall report to the Council There is
little hope of his being much better What do you think, Willis?

WILLIS

None He is done for this time!

HALFORD

Well, we must soften it down a little, so as not to upset the
Queen too much, poor woman, and distract the Council un-
necessarily Eldon will go pumping up bucketfuls, and the
Archbishops are so easily shocked that a certain conventional
reserve is almost forced upon us

WILLIS (returning from the King)

He is already better The paroxysm has nearly passed Your opinion will be far more favourable before you leave

The KING soon grows calm, and the expression of his face changes to one of dejection The attendants leave his side he bends his head and covers his face with his hand, while his lips move as if in prayer He then turns to them

KING (meekly)

I am most truly sorry, gentlemen,
If I have used language that would seem to show
Discourtesy to you for your good help
In this unhappy malady of mine !
My nerves unstung, my friends, my flesh grows weak
"The good that I would do I leave undone,
The evil which I would not, that I do !"
Shame, shame on me !

WILLIS (aside to the others)

Now he will be as low as before he was in the other extreme

KING

A king should bear him kingly, I, of all,
One of so long a line O shame on me !
—This battle that you speak of?—Spain, of course ?
Ah—Albueira ! And many fallen—eh ? Yes ?

HALFORD

Many hot hearts, su, cold, I grieve to say
There's Major-General Hoghton, Captain Bourke,
And Herbert of the Third, Lieutenant Fox,
And Captains Erck and Montague, and more
With Majors-General Cole and Stewart wounded,
And Quartermaster General Wallace too
A total of three generals, colonels five,
Five majors, fifty captains, and to these
Add ensigns and lieutenants sixscore odd,
Who went out, but returned not Heavily tithed
Were the attenuate battalions there
Who stood and bearded Death by the hour that day !

KING

O fearful price for victory ! Add thereto
All those I lost at Walcheren —A crime
Lay there ! I stood on Chatham's being sent
It wears on me, till I am unfit to live !

WILLIS (aside to the others)

Don't let him get on that Walcheren business There will be
another outbreak Heberden, please ye talk to him He fancies
you most

HEBERDEN

I'll tell him some of the brilliant feats of the battle (He goes
and talks to the KING)

WILLIS (to the rest)

Well, my inside begins to cry cupboard I had breakfast
early We have enough particulars now to face the Queen's
Council with, I should say, Sir Henry ?

HALFORD

Yes —I want to get back to town as soon as possible to day
Mrs Siddons has a party at her house at Westbourne to-night,
and all the world is going to be there

BAILLIE

Well, I am not But I have promised to take some friends
to Vauxhall, as it is a grand gala and fireworks night Miss
Fairen is going to sing "The Canary Bird"—The Regent's fete,
by the way, is postponed till the nineteenth, on account of this
relapse Pretty grumpy he was at having to do it All the
world will be *there*, sure !

WILLIS

And some from the Shades, too, of the fair sex —Well, here
comes Heberden He has pacified his Majesty nicely Now we
can get away

The physicians withdraw softly, and the scene is covered

SCENE VI

LONDON CARLTON HOUSE AND THE STREETS ADJOINING

It is a cloudless midsummer evening and as the west fades the stars beam down upon the city the evening star hanging like a jonquil blossom They are dimmed by the unwonted radiance which spreads around and above Carlton House As viewed from aloft the glare rises through the skylights, floods the forecourt towards Pall Mall, and kindles with a diaphanous glow the huge tents in the gardens that overlook the Mall The hour has arrived of the Prince Regent's festivity

A stream of carriages and sedan chairs moving slowly, stretches from the building along Pall Mall into Piccadilly and Bond Street and crowds fill the pavements watching the bejewelled and feathered occupants In addition to the grand entrance inside the Pall Mall colonnade there is a covert little "chan door" in Warwick Street for sedans only, by which arrivals are perceived to be slipping in almost unobserved

SPIRIT IPONIC

*What domiciles are those, of singular expression,
Whence no guest comes to join the gemmed procession,
That, west of Hyde, thus, in the Park-side Lane,
Each front beclouded like a mask of pain?*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*Therein the princely host's two spouses dwell,
A wife in each Let me inspect and tell*

The walls of the two houses—one in Park Lane the other at Kensington—become transparent

*I see within the first his latter wife—
That Caroline of Brunswick whose brave sire
Yielded his breath on Jena's reeking plain,
And of whose kindred others yet may fall
Ere long, if character indeed be fate —
She idles feasting, and is full of jest
As each gay chariot rumbles to the rout
"I rank like you, Archbishops' wives," laughs she,
"Demed my husband's honours Funny me!"*

Suddenly a Beau on his way to the Carlton House festival halts at her house, calls, and is shown in

*He brings her news that a fresh favourite rules
Her husband's ready heart, likewise of those
Obscure and unmixed courtiers late deceased,
Who have in name been bidden to the feast
By blundering scribes*

The Princess is seen to jump up from table at some words from her visitor and clap her hands

*These tidings, juxtaposed,
Have fired her hot with curiosity;
And let her quick invention with a plan*

PRINCESS OF WALES

Mine God, I'll go disguised—in some dead name
And enter by the leetle, sly, chair-door
Designed for those not welcomed openly
There unobserved I'll note mine new supplanter '
'Tis indiscreet? Let indiscretion rule,
Since caution pensions me so scurvily '

SPIRIT IRONIC

Good Now for the other sweet and slighted spouse

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*The second roof shades the Fitzherbert Fair
Reserved, perverse As coach and coach roll by
She mopes within her lattice, lampless, lone,
As if she grieved at her ungracious fate,
And yet were loth to kill the sting of it
By frankly forsaking the Prince and town
"Bidden," says she, "but as one low of rank
And go I will not so unworthily
To sit with common dames!"—A flippant friend
Writes then that a new planet sways to night
The sense of her errant lord, wherein
The fair Fitzherbert muses hankeringly*

MRS FITZHERBERT (soliloquizing)

The guest-card which I publicly refused
Might, as a fancy, privately be used '
Yes—one last look—a wordless wan farewell
To this false life which glooms me like a krell,
And him, the cause, from some hid nook survey
His new magnificence,—then go for aye '

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*She cloaks and veils, and in her private chair
 Passes the Princess also stealing there—
 Two honest wives, and yet a differing pair !*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*With dames of strange repute, who bear a ticket
 For screened admission by the private wicket*

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*A wife of the body, a wife of the mind,
 A wife somewhat frowsy, a wife too refined
 Could the twain but grow one, and no other dames be,
 No husband in Europe more steadfast than he !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Cease fooling on weak waifs who love and wed
 But as the unweeting Urger may bestead !—
 See them withinside, dounce and diamonded*

The walls of Carlton House open, and the spectator finds himself confronting the revel

SCENE VII

THE SAME THE INTERIOR OF CARLTON HOUSE

A central hall is disclosed, radiant with constellations of candles, lamps and lanterns, and decorated with flowering shrubs. An opening on the left reveals the Grand Council-chamber prepared for dancing the floor being chalked with arabesques having in the centre ' G III R ', with a crown arms, and supporters. Orange-trees and rose-bushes in bloom stand against the walls. On the right hand extends a glittering vista of the supper-rooms and tables, now crowded with guests. This display reaches as far as the conservatory westward, and branches into long tents on the lawn.

On a dais at the chief table, laid with gold and silver plate, the Prince Regent sits like a lay figure, in a state chair of crimson and gold with six servants at his back. He swelters in a gorgeous uniform of scarlet and gold lace which represents him as a Field Marshal, and he is surrounded by a hundred and forty of his puticular friends.

Down the middle of this state table runs a purling brook crossed by quaint bridges, in which gold and silver fish frisk about between brinks of moss and flowers. The whole scene is lit with wax candles in chandeliers and in countless candelabra on the tables.

The people at the upper tables include the Duchess of York, looking tired from having just received as hostess most of the ladies present, except those

who have come informally, Louis XVIII of France, the Duchess of Angoulême, all the English Royal Dukes nearly all the ordinary Dukes and Duchesses, also the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Ministers the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress all the more fashionable of the other Peers, Peeresses, and Members of Parliament, Generals, Admirals, and Majors, with their wives The ladies of position wear almost to the extent of a uniform, a nodding head dress of ostrich feathers with diamonds and gowns of white satin embroidered in gold or silver on which, owing to the heat dribbles of wax from the chandeliers occasionally fall

The Guards bands play and attendants rush about in blue and gold livery

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*The Queen, the Regent's mother, sits not here,
Wanting, too, are his sisters, I perceive,
And it is well With the distempered King
Immured at Windsor, sore distraught or dying,
It borders nigh on an indelicacy
In their regard, that this loud feast is kept,
A thought not strange to many, as I read,
Even of those gathered here*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*My dear phantom and ciony, the gloom upon their faces is due
rather to their having borrowed those diamonds at eleven per cent
than to their loyalty to a suffering monarch ' But let us test the
feeling I'll spread a report*

He calls up the SPIRIT OF RUMOUR, who scatters whispers through the assemblage

A GUEST (to his neighbour)

Have you heard this report—that the King is dead?

ANOTHER GUEST

It has just reached me from the other side Can it be true?

THIRD GUEST

I think it probable He has been very ill all the week

PRINCE REGENT

Dead? Then my fete is spoilt, by God!

SHERIDAN

Long live the King! (He holds up his glass and bows to the Regent)

MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD (the new favourite, to the Regent)

The news is more natural than the moment of it ! It is too cruel to you that it should happen now !

PRINCE REGENT

Damn me, though, can it be true ? (He provisionally throws a regal air into his countenance)

DUCHESS OF YORK (on the Regent's left)

I hardly can believe it This forenoon
He was reported mending

DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME (on the Regent's right)

On this side

They are asserting that the news is false—
That Buonaparte's child, the " King of Rome,"
Is dead, and not your royal father, she

PRINCE REGENT

That's mighty fortunate ! Had it been true,
I should have been abused by all the world—
The Queen the keenest of the chorus too—
Though I have been postponing this pledged first
Through days and weeks, in hopes the King would mend
Till expectation fusted with delay
But give a dog a bad name—O! a Prince !
So, then, it is this new come King of Rome
Who has passed or ever the world has welcomed him !
Call him a king—that pompous upstart's son—
Beside us scions of the ancient lines !

DUKE OF BEDFORD

I think that rumour untrue also, sir I heard it as I drove up
from Woburn this evening, and it was contradicted then

PRINCE REGENT

Drove up this evening, did ye, Duke Why did you cut it so
close ?

DUKE OF BEDFORD

Well, it so happened that my sheep-shearing dinner was fixed
for this very day, and I couldn't put it off So I dined with
them there at one o'clock, discussed the sheep, rushed off, drove

the two-and-forty miles, jumped into my clothes at my house here, and reached your Royal Highness's door in no very bad time

PRINCE REGENT

Capital, capital But, 'pon my soul, 'twas a close shave!

Soon the babbling and glittering company rise from supper and begin promenading through the rooms and tents, the REGENT setting the example and mixing up and talking unceremoniously with his guests of every degree. He and the group round him disappear into the remote chambers, but many concentrate in the Grecian Hall, which forms the foreground of the scene, whence a glance can be obtained into the ball-room now filled with dancers.

The band is playing the tune of the serenade "The Regency Hornpipe" which is danced as a country dance by some thirty couples, so that by the time the top couple have danced down the figure they are quite breathless. Two young lords talk desultorily as they survey the scene.

FIRST LORD

Are the rumours of the King of Rome's death confirmed?

SECOND LORD

No But they are probably true. He was a feeble brat from the first. I believe they had to baptize him on the day he was born. What can one expect after such presumption—calling him the New Messiah, and God knows what all. Ours is the only country which did not write fulsome poems about him. "Wise English!" the Tsar Alexander said only when he heard it.

FIRST LORD

Ay! The affection between that Pompey and Caesar has begun to cool. Alexander's soiness at having his sister thrown over so cavalierly is not salved yet.

SECOND LORD

There is much besides. I'd lay a guinea there will be a war between Russia and France before another year has flown.

FIRST LORD

Penny looks a little worried to night.

SECOND LORD

Yes. The Queen don't like the fête being held, considering the King's condition. She and her friends say it should have

been put off altogether. But the Princess of Wales is not troubled that way. Though she was not asked herself she went wildly off and bought her people new gowns to come in. Poor maladroit woman!

Another new dance of the year is started and another long line of couples begin to foot it.

That's a pretty thing they are doing now. What d've call it?

FIRST LORD

"Speed the Plough." It is just out. They are having it everywhere. The next is to be one of those foreign things in three-eight time they call Waltzes. I question if anybody is up to dancing 'em here yet.

"Speed the Plough" is danced to its conclusion, and the band strikes up "The Copenhagen Waltz."

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Now for the wives. They both were tearing hither,
Unless reflection sped them back again,
But dignity that nothing else may bend
Succumbs to woman's curiosity,
So deem them here. Messengers, call them nigh!*

The PRINCE REGENT having gone the round of the other rooms now appears at the bill room door and stands looking at the dancers. Suddenly, he turns and gazes about with a ruffled face. He sees a tall red-faced man near him—LORD MOIRA, one of his friends.

PRINCE REGENT

Damned hot here, MOIRA. Hottest of all for me!

MOIRA

Yes, it is warm, sir. Hence I do not dance.

PRINCE REGENT

H'm. What I meant was of another order,
I spoke it figuratively.

MOIRA

O indeed, sir?

PRINCE REGENT

She's here. I heard her voice. I'll swear I did!

MOIRA

Who, sir?

PRINCE REGENT

Why, the Princess of Wales Do you think I could mistake those beastly German Ps and Bs of hers?—She asked to come, and was denied, but she's got here, I'll wager ye, through the chair-door in Warwick Street, which I arranged for a few ladies whom I wished to come privately (He looks about again and moves till he is by a door which affords a peep up the grand staircase) By God, Moira, I see *two* figures up there who shouldn't be here—leaning over the balustrade of the gallery!

MOIRA

Two figures, sir Whose are they?

PRINCE REGENT

She is one The Fitzherbert is t'other! O I am almost sure it is! I would have welcomed her, but she bidded and said she wouldn't sit down at my table as a plain "Mrs" to please anybody As I had sworn that on this occasion people should sit strictly according to their rank, I wouldn't give way Why the devil did she come like this? 'Pon my soul, these women will be the death o' me!

MOIRA (looking cautiously up the stairs)

I can see nothing of her, sir, nor of the Princess either There is a crowd of idlers up there leaning over the bannisters, and you may have mistaken some others for them

PRINCE REGENT

O no They have drawn back their heads There have been such damned mistakes made in sending out the cards that the biggest w—— in London might be here She's watching Lady Hertford, that's what she's doing For all their indifference, both of them are as jealous as two cats over one tom

Somebody whispers that a lady has fainted up stairs

That's Maria, I'll swear! She's always doing it Whenever I hear of some lady fainting about upon the furniture at my presence, and sending for a glass of water, I say to myself, There's Maria at it again, by God!

SPIRIT IPONIC

Now let him hear their voices once again

The REGENT starts as he seems to hear from the strains the tongues of the two ladies growing louder and nearer, the PRINCESS pouring reproaches into one ear, and MRS LIT/HERPLER into the other

PRINCE REGENT

'Od seize 'em, MORA, this will drive me mad !
 If men of blood must mate with only one
 Of those dear dimmed deludeis called the Sex,
 Why has Heaven teased us with the taste for change ?—
 God, I begin to loathe the whole cuist show !
 How hot it is ! Get me a glass of brandy,
 Or I shall swoon off too Now let's go out,
 And find some fresher air upon the lawn
 Here MORA, YARMOUTH, quick and come along

Exit the PRINCE REGENT with LORDS MORIA and YARMOUTH The band strikes up "La Belle Catarina" and a new figure is formed

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Phantoms, ye strain your powers unduly here,
 Making faint fancies as they were indeed
 The Mighty Will's firm work*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Nay, Father, nay,
 The wives prepared to hasten hitherward
 Under the names of some gone down to death,
 Who yet were bidden Must they not be here ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*There lie long leagues between a woman's word—
 "She will, indeed she will !"—and acting on't
 Whether those came or no, thy antics cease,
 And let the revel wear it out in peace*

Enter SPENCER PEPCLVAL the Prime Minister a small, pale, grave looking man and an Under Secretary of State, meeting

UNDER-SECRETARY

Is the King of Rome really dead, and the gorgeous gold cradle wasted ?

PERCEVAL

O no, he is alive and waxing strong
That tale has been set travelling more than once
But touching it, booms echo to our ear
Of graver import, unimpeachable

UNDER-SECRETARY

Your speech is dark

PERCEVAL

Well, a new war in Europe
Before the year is out there may arise
A red campaign outscaling any seen
Russia and France the parties to the strife—
Ay, to the death !

UNDER SECRETARY

By Heaven, sir, do you say so ?

Enter CASTLEREAGH, a tall, handsome man with a Roman nose, who, seeing them, approaches

PERCEVAL

Ha, Castlereagh Till now I have missed you here
This news is startling for us all, I say !

CASTLEREAGH

My mind is blank on it ! Since I left office
I know no more what villainy's afoot,
Or virtue either, than an anchoret
Who mortifies the flesh in some lone cave

PERCEVAL

Well, happily that may not last for long
But this grave pothei that's just now agog
May reach such radius in its consequence
As to outspan our lives ! Yes, Bonaparte
And Alexander—late such bosom-friends—
Are closing to a mutual murder bout
At which the lips of Europe will wax wan
Bonaparte says the fault is not with him,
And so says Alexander But we know
The Austrian knot began their severance

And that the Polish question largens it
 Nothing but time is needed for the clash
 And if so be that Wellington but keep
 His foot in the Peninsula awhile,
 Between the pestle and the mortar-stone
 Of Russia and of Spain, Napoleon's brayed

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR (to the Spirit of the Years)

*Permit me now to join them and confirm,
 By what I bring from far, their forecasting ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll go Thou knowest not greatly more than they

The SPIRIT OF THE YEARS enters the apartment in the shape of a pale, hollow eyed gentleman wearing an embroidered suit. At the same time re-enter the REGENT, LORDS MORLEY, YARMOUTH, KEITH, LADY HERTFORD, SHERIDAN the DUKE OF BEDFORD, with many more notables. The band changes into the popular dance, 'Down with the French,' and the characters aforesaid look on at the dancers.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to Perceval)

*Yes, sir, your text is true In closest touch
 With European courts and cabinets,
 The imminence of dire and deadly war
 Betwixt these east and western empires
 Is tipped by special pathways to mine ear
 You may not see the impact ere it come
 The tomb-worm may carress thee (Perceval shrinks), but
 believe*

*Before five more have joined the shotten years
 Whose useless films infest the foggy Past,
 Traced thick with teachings glimpsed unheedingly,
 The rawest Dynast of the group concerned
 Will, for the good or ill of mute mankind,
 Down-topple to the dust like soldier Saul,
 And Europe's mouldy-minded oligarchs
 Be propped anew, while garments roll in blood
 To confused noise, with burning, and fuel of fire
 Nations shall lose their noblest in the strife,
 And tremble at the tidings of an hour !*

(He passes into the crowd and vanishes)

• PRINCE REGENT (who has heard with parted lips)
Who the devil is he ?

PERCEVAL

One in the suite of the French princes, perhaps, sir?—though his tone was not monarchical. He seems to be a foreigner.

CASTLEREAGH

His manner was that of an old prophet, and his features had a Jewish cast, which accounted for his Hebraic style.

PRINCE REGENT

He could not have known me, to speak so freely in my presence !

SHERIDAN

I expected to see him write on the wall, like the gentleman with the Hand at Belshazzar's Feast.

PRINCE REGENT (recovering)

He seemed to know a damn sight more about what's going on in Europe, sir (to Percival), than your Government does, with all its secret information.

PERCEVAL

He is recently over, I conjecture, your Royal Highness, and brings the latest impressions.

PRINCE REGENT

By Gad, sir, I shall have a comfortable time of it in my regency, or reign, if what he foresees be true ! But I was born for war, it is my destiny !

He draws himself up inside his uniform and stalks away. The group dissolves, the band continuing studently. Down with the French, as dawn glimmers in.

Soon the REGENT'S guests begin severally and in groups to take leave.

SPIRIT OF THE PHOENIX

*Behold To-morrow riddles the curtains through,
And labouring life without shoulders its cross anew !*

M

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Why watch we here? Look all around
Where Europe spreads her crinkled ground
From Osmanlee to Hekla's mound,
Look all around'*

*Hark at the cloud-combed Ural pines,
See how each, wailful wise, inclines,
Mark the mist's labyrinthine lines,*

*Behold the tumbling Biscay Bay,
The Midland main in silent sway,
As urged to move them, so move they*

*No less through regal puppet-shows
The rapt Determinator throes,
That neither good nor evil knows'*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES

*Yet It may wake and understand
Ere Earth unshape, know all things, and
With knowledge use a painless hand,
A painless hand'*

Solitude reigns in the chambers, and the scene shuts up